The Legend of Our Lady

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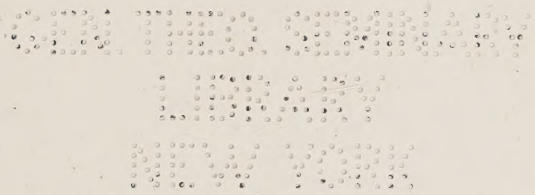
The Legend of Our Lady

By the Reverend Claude Crookston,

Priest of the American Church



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TO L. B. W.

Who in time of need
Was a friend indeed

Foreword

Among books of devotional character recently put forth there are few that treat of the Blessed Mother. The writer knows of no simple yet comprehensive manual suited to instruct lay people in this matter. Those that treat of the subject are either too technical or too sketchy. The writer makes no claim to scholarship. Many others could have done far better if they had tried. But a long period of illness and consequent enforced rest has given him more leisure than most priests of our great missionary Church, and therefore he wishes to offer this little book in lieu of a more active work for souls. Publication has been delayed through various unforseen causes, and in order to expedite printing the proof had to be read while the writer was recovering from a slight but very painful operation, and he therefore begs indulgence for typographical errors.

In order to make an inexpensive book the line between inclusion and exclusion has sometimes been rather arbitrarily drawn. For example, the well-known legend that after the resurrection our Lord appeared first to His holy Mother and then afterwards to those mentioned in Holy Writ, has not

been mentioned. In this connection it may be well to say that the word "legend" is used in the title of this book in the ecclesiastical sense of a devotional reading about the Saints, and not in the modern sense of a fable.

Mariophobia is a common affliction in these days. We should therefore remember that prejudice is sinful, for it is a refusal to believe the truth because we have pre-judged the matter without sufficient data for judgment. Truth is reality. Ultimately, truth is God. Prejudice keeps us from God. Historical novels of the type of Sir Walter Scott's are responsible for many misconceptions regarding what Catholics believe about our Lady. Scott is most interesting, but he seems to have thought that Catholicism consisted mostly of devotion to Saints. He probably never read one devotional treatise emanating from the times about which he wrote. If he had done so he would have revised his ideas. When we read of evening Masses, morning Vespers and abbots going to dinner parties in "copes curiously embroidered", we cannot but conclude that his knowledge of Catholicism was very limited, and that he eked it out from imagination for purposes of "local color." At any rate in these times Mariophobia rather than Mariolrate is to be guarded against.

C. C.

The Vicarage, Merrill, Wis., May 1919.

THE STORY OF OUR LADY'S LIFE DRAWN OUT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AND CHURCH TRADITION.

PART I.

"There is a generation that doth not bless their mother," says the wise man scornfully. [Prov. 30: 11.] In nearly every Christian community God has raised up some motherly soul whom all revere as "a Mother in Israel." Now, since the Blessed Virgin was divinely appointed to be the Mother of Jesus, our Brother, she is our Mother also, the one mother in the Church Universal. It is probably because she herself prophesied, "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed," that the custom has arisen, which is observed by every reverent-minded Christian, be he Catholic or Protestant, of calling the mother of our Lord "the Blessed Virgin Mary." This is certainly one way of blessing our Mother.

There is a very commendable feeling among some Christians that we must be careful to guard the dignity and unique position of Our Dear Lord, the Savior of the world, and therefore, they argue, we must be guarded in the honor which we pay to His Mother. This is a zeal for God but it is not often according to knowledge. Admit that some Christians have over-honored the Blessed Virgin,

admit that some have even deified her, does it follow that you and I, who know better than this and are in no danger of doing it, are free to forget what pertains to her honor? Our Lord has a human Heart and a human mind and a human will. Do you not suppose that He, out of filial love for His Mother, is angry at every discourtesy, every forgetfulness, every insult shown towards His blessed Mother? He would not be perfect Man as well as perfect God if He were not angry at such insults.

To refer to the Blessed Virgin as "Mary," as some Christians habitually do, is certainly discourteous. No one would think of referring in this fashion to the wife of our President. She is "the first lady of the land." How then does anyone dare to refer to the Mother of Our Lord, the King of Kings, as "Mary." She is the Blessed Virgin, "our Lady." The least we can do is to call her St. Mary. But there have been many saints by this name, notably St. Mary Magdalen and St. Mary Cleopas, and some special designation is needed for this greatest of all Saints. The title "Blessed Virgin" is the commonest one used for her, but for reasons indicated above, she is also called "our Lady." The English Church teaches us to call her by this last name. In the Church of England Prayer Book, the Feast of the Annunciation is called "Lady Day." This is certainly a very tender, courteous way of speaking of her. It probably arose in the days of chivalry when the normal mode of address to a gentlewoman was "my lady." Could any gentle-

man use a less respectful title to the Mother of his Lord? This domestic title, as it may be called, of the Blessed Virgin, was well nigh forgotten by members of the Anglican Communion of which the American Episcopal Church is a part: but in recent times it is becoming increasingly popular among us.

These words of introduction seem necessary in order to help any person unfamiliar with these titles to understand why they are used in this book. Let us now begin to consider what God has revealed to us about our Lady in Holy Scripture.

There are four remarkable and important prophesies in the Old Testament about the Blessed Virgin. The first is at the very beginning of the Bible. In the third chapter of Genesis we have the sad story of the Fall of Adam from grace. This tragic fact is the beginning of our holy Religion as a Religion of Redemption. **Salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ means **restoration** to the life of union with God in grace from which Adam fell by his sin, and in which condition of deprivation every child of the human race has been born ever since. The infinite love of God would not allow Him to forget the human race which He had created in His own image for a great spiritual destiny. Even though that race had gone over to His enemy by sinning against Him, He would still find a way to rescue and save all that could be won to Him. It was immediately after the Fall, therefore, that God pronounced a symbolic curse upon "that old serpent, the Devil," in the words:-"Because thou hast done

this, thou art cursed **** and I will put enmity between thee and **the Woman,** and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head but thou shalt bruise His heel."

It is not necessary to try to maintain that these words contain no reference to any other woman except our Lady. At any rate, if the word "Seed" in this passage ultimately means our Lord, so that He is the fulfillment of the prophesy, then ultimately "the Woman" means our Lady in order to fulfill the prophesy. It is therefore interesting to note that the original Hebrew phrase translated "the woman" could, according to some Hebrew scholars, be translated "a woman." It is also important to recall that St. Paul uses the word "seed" in a personal sense. [Gal. 3:15.] According to our understanding of these words we may paraphrase the passage something like this:

The Lord God said unto "that old serpent, the Devil" [Rev. 12:9]: "Because thou hast led the human race into sin in addition to thine own rebellion against Me when thou didst lead thy brother angels into sin, thou art cursed above every creature whom I have made, even the stupid cattle and beasts of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life [This is an oriental expression meaning "defeat, humiliation." We have a similiar expression in English]. And I will put enmity between thee and a Woman, since thou hast led mankind into sin by beguiling a woman, and between thy seed, even all thy evil fol-

lowers, whether they be fallen angels or fallen men, and her seed, even the second Adam, Jesus Christ and all His children begotten by His Redemption on the Cross. They shall crush thy head, so that thou shalt be helpless in thy evil power, and thou shalt only be able to inflict temporary hurt, first to thy thy Vanquisher in His Cross and Passion, and afterwards to everyone of His whom thou shalt mark with the Sign of Cross as a symbol of their likeness to Him and their unlikeness to thee." [Cf. Gen. 3:14-15.]

Every Christian belongs to the seed of blessed Mary, our Lady. For we are of the seed of Christ who is the "Seed of the Woman." And the Christtian religion, or Religion of the Incarnation is often called "the Religion of the Seed of the Woman." The Old Testament makes clear that the seed of the woman was the dominating thought always with the devout jews. Every woman felt it a disgrace to be childless on this account. The names which poor Eve gave to her sons testify to her faith in God's promise about the seed of the woman. The Jewish interest in the geneaiogies, which are so uninteresting to most of us is to be explained on this ground. Apparently, the sole reason for the Book of Ruth's being in the Bible is to trace the ancestry of the Seed of the Woman, for Ruth was an ancestress of our Lord.

The second important prophesy of our Lady in the Old Testament is in Isaiah, the Evangelical Prophet, who had so many visions and revelations

of our Lord. [Isa. 7, 1-17.] We know that this passage of Holy Scripture refers to the Blessed Virgin, not only from the words themselves, which seem to demand this interpretation, but also from St. Matthew's Gospel [Chap. 1:18.] which says they refer to our Lady's giving birth to the Lord Jesus. To understand the prophecy we must review the historical situation.

Ahaz, the King of Judah and therefore a decendant of David and an ancestor of our Lord, the promised Seed of the Woman, had done worse than any of his predecessors, for he had openly cast off the true Religion and become an idolater. Rezin, King of Syria and Pekah, King of Israel, had combined forces and were going to make an attempt to destroy the southern kingdom and put an end to David's line. But God had promised that the Savior would come of this line. The prophet is therefore sent to Ahaz to reassure him regarding God's protecting care of the House of David, for, because of the danger Jerusalem was in, Ahaz's heart, and the heart of his people, were moved "as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." [Isa. 7:2.]

Now Ahaz was "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool" looking after the water supply which would be so necessary if they were to undergo a siege. Isaiah is directed to go to the very spot where the King is at work, making frantic preparations for the on-coming enemy. Isaiah's son, whose strange name means "a remnant shall return," is to accompany his father, the prophet, as a reminder

of the captivity and the remnant that is to be saved, all of which has been prophesied as soon to happen to God's people if they will not return to His service in proper faith and obedience. [Verse 3.]

The message of comfort which God sends to Ahaz is that he must "take heed" to God's words and then "be quiet" in the trust that all is in God's hands, for He will surely protect the House of David out of which the Messiah is to come. The two enemy kings have no power to set Jerusalem on fire. They are mere tails or fag ends of smoking fire brands, soon to go out themselves. The great scourge of God, Assyria, will shortly destroy them. [Verse 5.] Their plot to put a Syrian, the son of Tabeal, [Verse 6] on the throne will not come to pass. However, before God can do anything for His recalcitrant people, they must have faith in Him. "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." [Verse 9.]

In His condescension and tenderness, God wishes to help the faint-hearted faith of Ahaz and offers to give Him a sign, any sign that he may ask, "either in the depth,. or in the height above" [Verses 10, 11, 12.] But Ahaz refuses God's protection, foolishly preferring to trust in his league with Assyria. He pretends to have scruples against "tempting" God by asking for a sign, or perhaps he is blasphemously ridiculing God's offer.

It is then that this wondrous sign is given, "A Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and call His name Emmanuel." Ahaz would be bound to recog-

nize in this description, the mighty deliverer, Messiah, who was to be born of his family. The expectation of that great event is the sole reason for all of God's promises of protection to the House of David. It is the chief glory of their kingdom and their king. But before this comes to pass [Verses 16 to end.] Judea will be destroyed by this very kingdom Assyria, whose protection it prefers to God's. Consequently Ahaz by his unbelief, is mortgaging the future and depriving his successor, the Messiah, of the throne of his father, David. Therefore, the Messiah will have to live a life of hardship and poverty: "butter and honey shall he eat," the food of privation or famine.

The first prophecy of the Blessed Virgin in Genesis places the emphasis on her maternity. The secprophecy stresses her virginity. It is a virgin, not a matron, who is to bear the Child of promise. From this and similar teachings in the New Testament the Church deduces the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin. As we all know, this beautiful prophesy is "the portion of Scripture appointed for the Epistle" on the Feast of the Annunciation.

The third prophecy is by Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah. "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little a mong the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will He give them up **until the time she which travail-**

eth hath brought forth: then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." [Micah 5:2.]

The prophet pictures Jerusalem in a state of seige or war. He then reveals that help in the trouble will come from the little city of David. This was fulfilled as we know by God raising up the Savior from the little city of Bethlehem at a time when His chosen people were under the yoke of the Romans. Apparently Micah is prophesying the far-off deliverance which he forsees as a comfort to a nation suffering under God's punishment for their sins.

The prophecy makes plain that the promised One is not an ordinary human being. "Whose goings forth have been from of old." That is, He who is to be born in Bethlehem as Man, was born of His Father from all eternity.

"Until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth" are the words that refer to our Lady, and they remind us of St. Paul's words: "In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." The rest of the verse and, in fact, of the whole chapter is an exquisite description of our Lord's kingdom, the Church, and of the conquest which He will make of the world. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever." [Rev. 11:15.]

The fourth prophecy of our Lady is by Saint Jeremiah, that great type of our Lord as the man

of sorrows. The words are these: "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A **Woman shall compass a Man.**" [Jer. 31:22.] That is to say, God's people, whom in love He calls His backsliding daughter, are to have a new remedy for their old sins, even a wonderful deliverer who is to be conceived with all his perfections fully developed. This can only refer to our Lord whose person was that of God the second person of the blessed Trinity, possessing all the infinite perfections of God. When the holy Virgin conceived, He with all His perfections united to Himself in her womb a human nature. He became man, not a man. He took to Himself a human body and a human soul with a human mind and a human will. But His Person had always existed. It was only His sacred humanity which needed to grow and develop as human persons do.

Some have supposed this prophecy to mean that even our Lord's humanity was conceived as that of a full-grown baby. But this does not seem to be a necessary interpretation. The essential point is that a Woman is to bear about in the sacred shrine of motherhood a man-child whose personality is perfect, so that He may be spoken of as "a Man."

There are many other allusions in type or prophecy to the Blessed Virgin in the Old Testament. Some of these we shall consider later in

this book. Let us begin now with an account of her life who is thus foretold.

Tradition says that the Blessed Virgin's parents were St. Anna and St. Joachim. Even so rationalistic a book as Hasting's Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels admits that this is a probable tradition. At any rate it is obvious that our Lady had a father and mother, and it is hard to believe that they were other than holy since they bore a daughter who is the holiest of women. If tradition is wrong in calling them "Anna" and "Joachim," it matters not. It suffices to call them thus when we wish to commemorate them. St. Anne is commemorated on the twenty-sixth of July and St. Joachim usually on the sixteenth of August, the day after the Feast of the Assumption.

Holy Scripture makes it most plain that our Lord is the heir to the throne of David. "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." Yet both of the genealogies given in the New Testament seem to trace back our Lord's ancestry through St. Joseph to David, rather than through our Lady. However, some have supposed that the genealogy in St. Luke is our Lady's. That Gospel is the one which tells most about her, particularly giving all the intimate details about our Lord's birth, which would be known only to her. It would seem that St. Luke had obtained his knowledge of these things direct from her. Those who believe this genealogy to be that of the blessed mother, would read it thus: "Jesus Himself, when

He began [Sc. His ministry] was thirty years of age (being, as was supposed, the Son of Joseph), and was the son of Heli, who was the son of Matthat." [St. Lk. 3:23.] Heli is almost the same word as Joachim in Hebrew, both meaning the same thing, one word being compounded with "Jah" and the other with "El," the two Hebrew names for God. Such an interpretation would make this genealogy read "Matthat, Joachim, Jesus." The genealogy given at the beginning of St. Matthew's Gospel reads "Matthat, Jacob, Jesus." As we shall see, tradition says that our Lady and St. Joseph were cousins, and so would have the same grandfather, Matthat; and inasmuch as our Lord had no human father, his genealogy would read, "Matthat, Joachim, [Mary,] Jesus."

Why both genealogies given in the Scriptures should trace our Lord's succession through His foster-father instead of His Mother, has always been a puzzle to Bible students. Many explanations have been given. But in any event it is clear that Mary belonged to the House of David if her son was the heir to the throne. Therefore her holy parents, St. Anna and St. Joachim, were of royal blood. Tradition says that St. Anna came of the family of Aaron, the tribe of priests. In this way our Lord became the heir of the Priesthood as well as of the Kingship of Israel.

It is also antecendently probable that our Lady's birth was in answer to great spiritual desire and prayer for her, as was the birth of Sam-

uel the prophet and of St. John, the Forerunner of our Lord. Tradition says her birth was announced by an angel, like that of Isaac, Sampson and the Baptist. It is hard to believe that so holy and wonderful a person could be born without pre-natal influences of great holiness. The Church has a feast [Dec. 8] in honor of our Lady's conception. Many persons hold it as a pious opinion, and the Roman Church teaches it as a dogma necessary to salvation, that from the first moment Mary was conceived in the womb of St. Anne, she was kept free, by a special intervention of God the Holy Ghost, from all taint of original sin. In the Roman Church, therefore, the Feast of our Lady's Conception is always called "the Feast of the Immaculate Conception." The nativity of the Blessed Virgin is celebrated on the eighth of September.

Nazareth and Jerusalem have both claimed the honor of her birth. It is pleasant to think that our Lord became incarnate in the very house in which His mother was born, and this is probably why Nazareth is popularly called our Lady's birth place. There is a strange legend that the Holy House in which the Holy Family lived in Nazareth, was, in the thirteenth century, transported bodily by a miracle from Palestine, which was in the hands of the infidels, and deposited at Loretto in Italy. The house is still shown and venerated and a feast kept in honor of its supposed translation. The collect is as follows:

"O God, who didst mercifully consecrate the

"house of the Blessed Virgin Mary through the "mystery of the incarnate Word, and didst miraculously place it in the midst of thy Church: grant "that, being separated from the tabernacles of sinners, we made be made worthy dwellers in thy "holy House."

Tradition goes on with the beautiful story. St. Anna's relatives being priests, there would be be many houses in Jerusalem open to the Virgin's parents. Some suppose that they went there to live during her childhood in order that she might be able to attend the temple services and receive instructions from the holy teachers therein. At the age of three she is said to have been carried thither that she might be presented solemnly to God. It is easy to believe, especially when we recall that Holy Scripture says the same was true of the holy Forerunner of our Lord, that her infancy and childhood was especially influenced by an outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, all Catholic theologians agree that our Lady never sinned, and that she was always guided and protected in a special manner by His over-shadowing. It would not be unnatural, if this were so, that her faculties should be more fully developed than other children at the age of three. So the story of her life says that at her presentation to God in the Temple, she was swept by a sudden inspiration to vow herself to God as a perpetual virgin. Some modern scholars insist this would not have been possible because

the Jews thought virginity shameful. Yet the Essenes took similar vows, as we know from contemporary history. The Church commemorates the Presentation of our Lady in the Temple on the twenty-first of November.

From this time on she is supposed to have lived in or near the temple, like St. Anna, the prophetess, "who departed not from the Temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." When she sang the Magnificant in later days she showed that she had lived a life of deep communion with God and of devout meditation upon His holy word. It was during these years that she acquired that profound wisdom which afterwards she used to guide the infant mind of the sacred Humanity of God. Many were the ecstacies and visions that God would give her during the period of preparation. Surely the holiest of women must have rivaled St. Teresa and all the great ecstatics in experiences of conscious union with God. She would only be able to conceive the Christ in her womb by first conceiving Him in her heart.

It is said that at the age of fourteen the High Priest wished to send her home in order that she might be married to some young man. When our Lady reminded him of her vow of chastity, he was greatly perplexed and consulted God in prayer as to what he should do. It was revealed to him that this choicest lamb in his flock should indeed marry. To this end all the unmarried men of the line of David were to be called together and each one was

to bring a rod. When they had assembled in the temple, he who was chosen to be the spouse of this virgin, would be shown by a sign. This was done, and among the young men came the older man, Joseph. They all awaited prayerfully until the High Priest should know whom God had elected. Suddenly a beautiful dove fluttered down upon the rod which Joseph held, and the rod was seen to put forth flowers. The little Virgin, obedient to the director ofthe holy church, gave herself to him and they were betrothed. In some places a day is kept commemorating this event, called"the Feast of the Espousal of the Blessed Virgin to St. Joseph." [Jan. 23.]

At any rate our Lady was espoused to St. Joseph, and apparently at an early age. The marriageable age was thirteen years. It is with this event that both accounts of her life in Holy Scripture begin. [St. Mat. 1:18, St. Lk. 1:27]. If she were at Jerusalem at the actual betrothal service, she would naturally return to her parent's home afterwards. It was the custom for a Jewish maiden to be betrothed for a year before the marriage took place. Thus we read in St. Matthew: Jesus' "Mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together," i. e., were married. This year she spent at Nazareth.

We cannot but wonder how she felt about her vow if tradition on that point be true. She always shows such implicit trust in God and perfect resignation to His will in every account of her in Holy

Scripture that we may be sure she did not worry about it. In God's good time she would understand. Meanwhile she helped her mother with the housework and said her prayers. It seems plain that both St. Joachim and St. Joseph were very poor. Certainly it was just that condition that we have fore-shadowed in the prophecy of Isaiah about the Holy Family. The only claim to worldly honor that our Lady possessed was her descent from King David, and if she and St. Joseph were cousins, they were both heirs to David's throne. Since St. Joseph was our Lord's foster-father, our Lord would inherit Joseph's rights in the matter as well as His Mother's. At any rate, the matter of descent would be a sufficient reason for her being given in marriage only to a man of the House of David, no matter whether he was rich or poor.

It was during her residence at Nazareth after her espousal to St. Joseph that the Annunciation took place. St. Luke describes it in grand simplicity. "The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the House of David, and the Virgin's name was Mary." Christian artists have represented this great ambassador from the court of heaven as coming down along a road filled with a guard of honor of thousands of angels; and it is a pretty conceit of Catholic mythology to identify this with the milky way. The artists also conceive of the Virgin as meditating

upon the great mysteries of God when this high ambassage came. "The Angel came in unto her and said: 'Hail, thou that are highly-favored, the Lord is with thee' ". "Highly-favored" is equivalent to endued with grace, or "full of grace," as the usual version of this passage is, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee."

In her humility and wisdom, "she was troubled at his saying" and tried to think what such a manner of salutation meant. Seeing her perplexity, the archangel comforted her. "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." This sentence plainly shows our Lady's pre-eminent holiness. Then the great message is delivered. "Behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus.... of His Kingdom there shall be no end." Then Mary bethinks of her vow. "How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man? " The archangel answers that she is to conceive by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost and not in any earthly wise. "O wondrous intercourse" exclaims the Church in one of her liturgical forms. "O wondrous intercourse! The Creator of mankind, taking a living body, vouchsafed to be born of a Virgin, and, without seed, coming forth as Man, hath given unto us His Godhead." Nothing mars the exquisite simplicity of her immediate submission to the will of God. She had her forebodings of the pain which was to come from all this. Yet she answered at once:"Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me accor-

ding to His word." At that moment the Church believes that our Lord became incarnate in her womb, and the Feast of the Annunciation is therefore the commemoration of the Incarnation.

Some think that St. Matthew's story begins here. St. Joseph in some way discovered our Lady's secret, and "being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily." It was to escape his anger, they say, that she went to visit her kinswoman, St. Elizabeth. But this seems unlikely. Rather, she went to visit St. Elizabeth because St. Gabriel had suggested it. "Behold. thy cousin, Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren." The Blessed Virgin was a woman of silence, and therefore she would reverently guard her secret. But St. Elizabeth was having a similar experience. They both needed to take counsel and comfort of each other. "And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth."

When St. Elizabeth heard the Virgin's greetings, the babe leaped for joy in her womb. Was it not then that St. Gabriel's words to Zacharias were fulfilled: "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." Are we not justified in supposing that it was a reverent greeting, a genuflexion, as it were, from the Forerunner to his master? The Church sings of this in the

Breviary hymn for St. John Baptist's Day:—

"Witness thou barest, in the womb yet hidden,
"Unto thy Monarch, shrined in His chamber;
"Thus was each parent through her child obtaining
"Knowledge of Mysteries."

It was then that St. Elizabeth used the words that have since always been a part of the great hymn of the Incarnation, the Ave Maria. "Blessed art thou among women." "Hail Mary," said the Angel, "Full of grace, the Lord is with thee." "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus," said St. Elizabeth. To this the Church in after years added the petition: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

In answer to her Kinswoman's salutation Mary broke forth into that great paean of thanksgiving which the Church always sings at her Vesper Office in honor of the Incarnation, the Magnificat. Her holiness, her knowledge of holy Scripture, her love for God, her humility, her joy in doing His will, her great wisdom all shine forth in this wonderful hymn. It was undoubtedly influenced by the song of Hannah [I Sam. 2.] but how different it is.

We are told that our Lady "abode" with her Kinswoman about three months, staying until the birth of St. John. What holy conversations these two women had! Though St. Mary was but a maiden and St. Elizabeth an old matron, yet the humility of the elder made her reverence the dignity of

the younger. "Whence is this honor to me," she exclaimed, "that the Mother of my Lord should to come to me." Is it strange that the Church commemorates by a Festival this Visitation? [July 2.]

Our Lady then returned to Nazareth, and St. Joseph was taught by St. Gabriel, the Archangel of the Annunciation, that his betrothed was to bear the Messiah and his vocation in life was to protect the Mother and Son. [St. Mat. I:20.] It is then that marriage was solemnized between them, for shortly afterward they go to Bethlehem together for the taxing. Jewish custom would have forbidden this without actual marriage in spite of the fact that betrothal would be sufficient to guard the Virgin's honor regarding the conception of our Lord.

We all know the part of the story which comes here, how Mary painfully made the journey to Bethlehem, how the stable became her refuge, where our Lord was born, how the Shepherd's came to worship the newborn King, how our Lord was presented in the Temple. These belong to our Lord's life rather than to the Story of our Lady. It is interesting to note that the visit of the three wise men [St. Mat. 2] probably took place after the return from the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple rather than at the time of the visit of the shepherd's. The Scripture says: "When they were come **into the house.**" Apparently St. Joseph, true to his vocation of protector, had found a better place than the stable after they returned from the Presentation at Jerusalem.

One of the hardest periods of our Lady's life must have been that spent in the heathen darkness of Egypt. Obliged to fly from the wrath of Herod, who sought to kill the young Child, it would have been sad to feel that the holy land had no place for the Savior. He was rejected in His infancy, even as He was in manhood. But the journey to Egypt has been made bright with beautiful stories. We are told that on the way all the beasts knelt to adore the little Lord Jesus, enthroned in His Mother's arms. Even though He was rejected of men, God raised up the dumb beasts to testify to His Godhead. Of course this belongs to the realm of poetry rather than of historical fact. The historical fact, however, is clear. It was in this land of sin and error that our Lord spent His earliest Childhood. After their return from Egypt Holy Scripture shows us they lived a life of retirement at Nazareth. Their Son, "the Desire of all Nations", must not be exposed to the dangers of publicity again. This is why so little is known of our Lord's hidden life at Nazareth. In fact that very hiddenness is meant to teach us a great lesson. Our Lord was thirty years preparing for His ministry of three. Our life of prayer and retirement in God ought to exceed our life of activity in the ratio of ten to one.

St. Luke lifts the veil for us, and allows us to know something of that life. St. Joseph, we know was a carpenter. Our Lord learned the trade in His foster-father's shop, and helped to earn "the daily bread" which He afterwards taught us all to pray

for. His hands were hardened by toil. His will was disciplined by obedience, for He, the Son of God, "was subject unto" God's creatures, Mary and Joseph. His soul was nourished by worship, for "His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover." [St. Lk. 2:41.] When our Lord was twelve years old, a great sorrow came to our Lady. They went up to Jerusalem, as was their custom every year, and when they returned "the Child Jesus tarried behind." When his mother missed Him and could not find Him, what agony it must have been! Such a Son—

"A Son that never did amiss,
"That never shamed His Mother's kiss,
"Nor crossed her fondest prayer."

How she must have reproached herself with failing in her God-given vocation: and though she understood not the reason which He gave for causing her this sorrow, she kept all that He had said in her heart and pondered on it. Such was the silence and wisdom of our Lady.

Back in Nazareth again, He resumed His life of obedience to her. Since there is no further mention of St. Joseph, it is supposed that he died at this time. His vocation in life was to care for our Lady and her Son. When that holy Son was old enough to care for Himself and His Mother, God removed the protector. From that time on our Lord must have provided for them both by the labor of His own hands.

At the age of thirty He began His ministry

with the miracle of the turning water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilea. Protestant writers have tried to make out that He rebuked His Mother on this occasion. But no words could be more respectful than those He used to her. [St. Jno. 2.] They seem to mean: "Do not worry. When my hour comes, all will be well." At any rate He wrought His first miracle at her intercession.

As our Lord went about from place to place He must often have visited with her. She doubtless followed Him when she could, along with the holy women "who ministered unto Him of their substance." [St. Jno. 8:3.] In his early ministry, when His friends decided that He was insane [St. Mk. 3:21] and were going to arrest Him, she went along, without doubt to protect Him all she could. [Verse 32.] She is mentioned by an unknown woman [St. Lk. 11:27]as though she were present during one of our Lord's sermons. When He went through the valley of the shadow of death, she was still with our Lord, trying to watch over Him and comfort Him and mother Him to the very last. With that exquisite tenderness and filial love which must always have characterized our Lord's attitude to His Mother, in His death-agony He does not forget her, but bequeathes her to St. John. "Woman, behold thy Son.....Behold thy Mother." [St. Jno. 19-25]. What grace, what courage it must have taken to stand beneath the Cross and see her Son die and not complain against the will of God. Well was Simeon's prophecy fulfilled, "Yea, a sword shall

pierce through thine own soul also." [St. Lk. 2:35.]

"From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." The fact that in his Gospel, St. John never refers to her as "Mary", shows the special reverence he felt for her, and how he honored this new relationship. He calls her "the Mother of Jesus" or "His Mother" but never "Mary." Traditition says that after Pentecost, when our Lady was present with all the disciples to receive the outpouring of the Holy Ghost [Acts 1:14], she went with St. John to Ephesus and died there. Another tradition tells of her retirement to Mt. Carmel to live as a nun with certain other holy persons. At any rate it is believed that she did not long survive after her Son descended into heaven. Tradition says that she so ardently desired "to depart and be with Christ" that it caused her death. "I am sick of love", says the Song of Songs. Surely it is beautiful and helpful to think she died of love for Jesus even as He died of love for us.

But what became of her holy body, that body which was in a special manner the Temple of God? Whether we accept the pious opinion of the immaculate conception or not, it is necessary to believe that she was cleansed from original sin before our Lord became incarnate in her womb. We recall, also, that all Catholic theologians teach her sinessness. This being so, it is difficult to think of that pure body, which gave the Humanity of God to the world, as undergoing a process of decay in the tomb. Consequently Catholics usually accept the

pious opinion that her body was granted resurrection shortly after her burial. It is certain that her death was a holy one, and "right dear in the sight of the Lord": and if Enoch and Elijah were carried to heaven [Heb. 11:5, I Kings 2], Mary certainly must have been.

Several places claim to be our Lady's place of departure for heaven. The usual tradition is that she died in Ephesus, the place where St. John was living. The Christians buried her with every honor they could and came away from the tomb with mingled feelings of sorrow and joy. Three days later a sound of music and singing, like as of angels, was heard at her tomb, and when the Christians resorted thither, they found her body gone and the grave filled with beautiful roses that gave forth an odor of marvelous fragrance. The Church keeps a day in honor of this falling asleep in Jesus of His Mother on the fifteenth of August. It is usually styled "the Feast of the Assumption."

No relics of the Blessed Virgin's body have ever been claimed to exist. Yet her empty tomb is said to have been venerated in early days at Ephesus. This is the only evidence on the subject, aside from the early tradition. However, all Christians will agree that the blessed mother is in heaven now with her Son, enthroned as Mistress of Angels and Queen of Saints. As the Church sings on her Feast, "The holy Mother of God is exalted above the choirs of Angels to the heavenly Kingdoms. She is taken up to the celestial bridal chamber

wherein the King of kings sitteth on a starry throne."

Ave Maria! Mother blest,
To whom, caressing and caressed,
  Clings the Eternal Child;
Favored beyond Archangel's dream
When first on thee with tenderest gleam
  Thy new-born Savior smiled:—
Ave Maria! thou whose name
All but adoring love may claim,
  Yet may we reach thy shrine;
For He, thy Son and Savior, vows
To crown all lowly, lofty brows
  With love and joy like thine.

—Rev. John Keble.

PART II. THE INSTRUCTIONS.

This section really contains only one instruction, divided into four parts, so that, if the book is used as a guide for May devotions, one part may be used as a homily for each Sunday in May. They are meant to put before the reader in simple form all that the Church believes about the blessed Mother of our divine Lord. They are necessary as an introduction to the meditations of Part III on the titles which the Church has conferred on the Blessed Virgin.

INSTRUCTION I.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

"There is one mediator between God and man, even the man Jesus Christ." Thus St. Paul sums up the Catholic Faith for his spiritual son, St. Timothy. [I TIM. 2, Verse 5.] What a pregnant saying it is! And what a great Doctor of the Church St. Paul was. One can understand why he is the best beloved by Anglicans of all the Saints, and why we dedicate most of our Churches to him. A modern scholar has declared that next after our blessed Lord, he is the founder of the Catholic Church. He, if any Saint deserves it, should be reverenced as the Patron Saint of the whole Church. Any instruction, such as this, about the Church will have to be based on the teaching which he gives us about it in his Epistles.

What does he mean when he says that the man, Jesus Christ, is the sole Mediator between God and man? He means that sin has made a great chasm between God and man and that it is the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ which has bridged it. What a foolish saying that is: "I do not want any man to come between my soul and God." The foundation principle of Christianity is to have the Man, Jesus Christ, come between your soul and God. No man dares to stand before God except this Mediator stands in between. Nay, more, there is no approach to God save through this Mediator. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the Door through Whom we enter in. [St. Jno. Verse 6:10, Verse 9.]

By the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, the fountain-head of the human race became polluted. Just as a healing mineral spring may be rendered of no effect by the introduction into it of some chemical which destroys the healing properties of the water, just so sin entered in and destroyed the life-giving, supernatural grace with which God had imbued Adam and Eve. As the theological expression is, they lost "original righteousness." Consequently they have transmitted to their descendants "a fallen nature," a state of spiritual deadness which we describe as "original sinfulness." But Jesus Christ restores the lost life of supernatural grace to us. He came that we might have life and have it in abundance. [St. Jno. 10, Verse 10.] "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." [I Cor. 15, Verse 22.]

Christianity is a religion of redemption and restoration. That is what the word "Salvation" means, a state of spiritual healthfulness. We are by nature, i. e., by our natural birth, children of wrath, says the Prayer Book Catechism. That is, we are members of a fallen, rebellious and apostate race. During the war just past any German-born man, woman or child was our enemy, unless naturalized. Just so every human being is born the enemy of God, and by the very fact of our nature, which is sinful and fallen, it is plain that we will give way to sin until we have destroyed all that is left of the spiritual ruin of our nature, and so bring upon ourselves the wrath of God, which He has prepared for the devil and his Angels. But there is a way of becoming "naturalized" into the Kingdom of God. God loves His enemies and wants to save them, no matter at what cost to Himself so long as His own righteousness is vindicated. And so Christ died, "the Just for the unjust." [I Pt. 3, Verse 18.] One Lord is called "the Just" in this passage because the effect of His death is "the justification," as St. Paul calls it [Gal. 3,Verse 11] of those persons who live a life of faith **in** and faithfulness **to** Him as their Saviour.

What do we mean by justification? We mean that whereas we are the enemies of God because of original and actual sin, when we became Christians we are made righteous or "**justified**" in the sight of God. Now it is evident that the God of truth cannot call us righteous or holy if we are not. In a

beautiful hymn written by a saintly scholar of our Church, we pray:

"Only look on us as found in Him."

This expresses it exactly. We are justified by having the one Mediator between God and man impart Himself to us. We are made holy by having His holiness infused into us and are thus "partakers of the Divine Nature." [St. Peter.]

But how is this justification to take place? Because incarnate God died on the Cross to save all men from their sins that has not accomplished the salvation of the world. It is obvious that God cannot save a person against his will. To be saved, we, on our part, must co-operate with God. Sin is the suicide of the soul, for "the wages of sin is death," and one cannot save a suicide who refuses to allow the poison which he has taken to be counteracted by antidotes. That the antidote is the most precious Blood of incarnate God, the most costly medicine the world has ever known, does not make it efficacious to those who refuse it. Is there not, therefore, some definite, concrete way in which we can receive this life-giving antidote to sin and death, and be filled anew with that grace which Adam and Eve lost.

We have seen that the mediation of the one Mediator between God and man consists of uniting us human beings to His Sacred Humanity which is already united to God, for He is God and man. Hence through Christ, the Door, we enter into a life of union with God. His mediation, then, con-

sists principally in imparting Himself to us. St. Paul tells us that our life is hid with Christ in God. [Col. 3, Verse 3.] His favorite description of a Christian life is the phrase which he uses again and again, "in Christ." No man is a Christian unless He is "in Christ" for the Church teaches us in the Prayer Book Catechism that we are made Christians by Baptism, "wherein we are made members of Christ." This is the definite and concrete way in which the supernatural life, lost by the human race at Adam's first sin, is again given to us, only it must be acquired by each person individually by submitting obediently to Baptism, and retained by cherishing and increasing the gift given in that Sacrament by holy living and the reception of the other Sacraments. "As many of you as have been Baptized into Christ have put on Christ." [Gal. 3, Verse 29.]

It follows, then, that all the Baptized are in union with Christ, unless, of course, they have separated themselves from Him by a mortal sin. "There is a sin unto Death," says St. John. He means, of course, that we can sin so wilfully as to kill, just as Adam and Eve did, all the work of grace in our souls begun there by Baptism. But if we are "in grace" it is because we are "in Christ." This union of all the Baptized with Christ makes up a great body—the Body of Christ, St. Paul calls it. [Eph. 1, Verse 23.] Of course some persons are more closely united to Jesus Christ than others. There are many Baptized people who have allowed worldiness, unbelief or some other sin to separate

them from the love of Christ. They are bound to Him by the merest thread, as it were. Any severe temptation is liable to turn their venial sins into a mortal sin, and so finish the process of separation. It is those who humbly accept the whole Faith—all that has been revealed by the one Mediator about Salvation—and who are constantly receiving the Life of God through the other Sacraments of the Church and trying to do His will that enjoy the most intimate union with our Lord. Such people are called "the Faithful." Of them the Church speaks at Mass when she says that they are "very members incorporate in the mystical Body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all **faithful** people."

Why is the Church called the Body of Christ? Because Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church [Eph. 5, Verse 23], and it is ruled by His will and filled with His life and holiness. The purpose of the Church is to make Saints, and every Baptized person is on the way to become a Saint. He may not be very far onthe way but at least he has begun. It is for this reason that the Church is described as "holy" in the Creeds, and is called "the Communion of Saints." The word "communion" means a close union. All Christians are united to Christ and thereby to each other. By that organic union of theirs with Christ through the Sacraments they are being more and more filled with Christ until they come to perfection—"to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." [Eph. 4. Verse 11.]

God the Father looks down from heaven upon the fallen human race, but here and there amongst fallen men and women He sees a company of souls who by Baptism have had the merits of Christ infused into them so that they appear beautiful in His sight with the beauty of the incarnate Son Himself. These souls are the mystical Body of Christ on earth. the Catholic Church. It is this conception which differentiates the Catholic Religion from the Protestant. The Protestant believes that we are justified by faith apart from any definite and concrete sacramental means of justification. He believes that if we repent and "accept Christ" we are justified. This "accepting Christ" seems to mean that we are to make an intellectual act of faith in His all sufficient merits, which practically comes to this, that we are justified if we think we are. Justification is the fundamental point of the Christian Religion, and Protestantism thus makes religion into an intellectual and subjective system. Consequently Protestantism, as far as one can generalize about a religion so broken up into opposing theological systems, has no real place for sacramental grace.

But to us Catholics the Sacraments are "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual **grace given unto us.**" Not mere signs, but signs of grace given, "effectual signs," as the Thirty-nine Articles say, i. e., signs which effect what they signify. Baptism signifies washing from sin and a new birth into the Life of God, and not merely sig-

nifies it but effects it. Holy Communion signifies a Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ offered to God and effects it. The Church has her priests make "a declaration of Absolution" in the public Offices of the Church because they can and do absolve from mortal and venial sins in the Sacrament of Penance. Confirmation symbolizes strengthening and effects it by giving God the Holy Ghost to the soul through the laying on of the Bishop's hands. Holy Matrimony, when solemnized between two Baptized people with the sanction and blessing of the Church, symbolizes and effects the union of the two persons in Christ for a special state of life, and gives them grace sufficient for the difficulties of that life. Holy Order symbolizes the clothing of a chosen man with the Priesthood of Jesus and effects it. These are the two Sacraments which the Church has expressly declared "necessary to salvation" and the Five other Sacraments helpful to Salvation, which are received in every part of the Catholic Churchtoday as divinely covenanted and authorized points of contact with the Life of God.

It is plain to all who study the Prayer Book as a commentary on holy Scripture that both the Bible and the Church teach salvation through the Sacraments by union with the one Mediator, and that the Sacraments are administered to us by the Priesthood of the Church, which Priesthood our Lord Himself instituted by ordaining the Apostles [St. Jno. 20, Verse 22] and giving them authority [Verse 21,] and promising to be with them to

the end of the world [St. Mat. 28, Verse 20,] a promise which could only be fulfilled by their ordaining a line of successors to inherit their office.

Having a Priesthood does not put a priest between my soul and God: rather it puts Jesus Christ there by ensuring union with God through the one Mediator wno is communicated to us through the Sacraments which the priests administer. In other words, the one Mediator has formed for Himself a new Body here in the world, the Catholic Church, through which He mediates, and that new Body, united to the life-giving Body which was born of Mary, died on the Cross, lay in the Sepulchre, and rose from the dead, is an integral part of the one mediation.

Collect for the First Sunday After Easter.

Almighty Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From the Office of Institution.

O Holy Jesus, who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church, and hast promised to be with the Ministers of Apostolic Succession to the end of the world; Be graciously pleased to bless the ministry and service of those appointed to offer the sacrifices of prayer and praise to thee in thy house, which is called by thy Name. May the words of their mouth, and the meditation of their heart, be always accep-

table in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; Grant that, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, all Christians may be so joined together in unity of spirit, and in the bond of peace, that they may be an holy temple acceptable unto thee. And especially give unto [all] thy people the abundance of thy grace; that with one heart they may desire the prosperity of the holy Apostolic Church, and with one mouth may profess the faith once delivered to the Saints. Defend them from the sins of heresy and schism; let not the foot of pride come nigh to hurt them, nor the hand of the ungodly to cast them down. And grant that the course of this world may be so peacefully ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; that so they may walk in the ways of truth and peace, and at last be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting; through thy merits, O blessed Jesus, thou gracious Bishop and Shepherd of our souls, who art with the Father and the Holy Ghost one God, world without end. Amen.

INSTRUCTION II.

I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church.

In these instructions on Catholic truths we are considering the Faith from the point of view of indiv-

dual experience. Just because Protestanism, which surrounds and influences all of us, no matter what creed we profess, is so subjective and individualistic, it is perhaps best to approach the subject of the Church, or corporate religion, from the standpoint of individual experience.

We have considered in the previous instruction how St. Paul's statement, "There is one Mediator between God and Man," necessitates belief not only in our incarnate God and "the mighty salvation" which He has wrought out for us, but also in the extension of the Incarnation through the Church to modern times, and bythe Priesthood of the Church through the seven Sacraments to each of us individually. We can only be saved by having a Man come between our souls and God, the Man Jesus Christ. The Church and the priests with the seven Sacraments which they administer, far from coming between our souls and God as a means of divisino, are the machinery which our Lord God, Jesus Christ, has Himself constructed in order to come between our souls and God as a means of union with Him. They are a machine to administer Jesus Christ to us. They are a splint around a broken member of the body, uniting and knitting together the broken parts.

"But is not this a very complicated and extensive machine to do such a simple work." We often hear such a complaint. The answer is plain. In the first place, the work of saving souls is a very hard, complicated task. Every possible spiritual

device is needed. In the second place, Catholicism is not a more complicated religion than other forms of Christianity, it is merely more definite more concrete. We have seen that the fundamental point of the Protestant form of Christianity is **to think** certain things. It is subjective and intellectual. If it be true that it is losing hold on the human race, as many think, it is because human beings live mostly in their bodies instead of in their minds, and therefore need something more added to intellectual religion, such as a definite Faith and the Sacraments, in order to have a religion that satisfies the whole man. It is this definiteness and concreteness in Catholicism that startles the newcomer. He has always thought of his religion as simple because it was indefinite and hazy. It has placed few, if any obligations upon him save belief in God and the Bible and the practice of certain moral virtues. The teaching, the discipline, the organization and the ceremonial of the Catholic Church therefore seem to him a very complicated matter. As a matter of fact they are the outward and visible expression of a very simple and definite faith.

Let us take an example. Jimmie Jones is the average Protestant boy of today. At Sunday School he learned to repeat the names of the books of the Bible and the Lord's Prayer. He knows something about a Person called "Jesus" but almost nothing about the Holy Trinity or how to fight sin or how to prepare for death. There are thousands

of such men, dear, good fellows, who go through life with the vaguest notions about the most important truths that man can know. Because of his ignorance of the spiritual life, of how to outwit and overcome the devil through prayer and sacramental grace, he falls into serious sin and it soon becomes a habit. He goes to war and is mortally wounded. On his deathbed the chaplain tries to get him ready to meet God, that God of whom he is so ignorant, face to face. How is the chaplain to do it?

St. John tells us in the twentieth Chapter of his Gospel, verse twenty-three, how our Lord meant the chaplain to do it. And, no- matter to what Church that chaplain belongs, it is obvious that if he knows how to deal with souls he will tell Jimmie to repent, i. e., to be sorry, to confess and to offer God what amendment or satisfaction is possible under the circumstances. This done, he will use all his ability and authority **to assure** Jimmie that God has forgiven the sin. This is practically confession and Absolution. In other words, religion must be definite and concrete in the great emergencies of life, and it is an emergency which tests the worth and reality of anything. Yet if you to try to explain the Sacrament of Penance to one who knew nothing of it, it might seem, like most new things, a very formal and complicated matter. We see then that the Catholic Religion is very business-like, a simple, definite, practical method of saving souls which has developed every possible contriv-

ance to carry out its purpose. It may appear to be a complicated matter to one who only knows the hazy, individualistic, go-as-you-please relligion of many so-called Christians of today.

This machinery, then, which we call the Catholic Church, was created by our Lord in order to mediate Himself, the Mediator, to us. We are, through the Church, to be filled with His life and holiness. In other words, the Church exists for the sole purpose of making Saints, and it is the mark of the true Church to produce Saints. Always the great forward movements of the Church have been carried on by Saints, and in every age of the Church we find many of them. In fact there have been such countless numbers of them that the Church, in happy despair of knowing and honoring all sufficiently, has instituted the Feast of All Saints, on November first, on which we commemorate them **en masse.**

To help us realize the continuity of holiness in the church, let us name over a few of these great heroes of the Kingdom of God. In the first century, the Blessed Virgin, St. Paul and all the holy Apostles and Disciples of our Lord. In the second century, St. Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr. In the third century, St. Alban, the Proto-martyr of England. In the fourth century, St. Athanasius, the great defender of the Faith. In the fifth century, St. Chrysostom, spoken of in the Prayer Book. In the sixth century, St. Benedict, the Father of Western Monasticism. In the Seventh century, St. Augustine,

Archbishop of Canterbury. In the eighth century, the Venerable Bede of England, Doctor of the Church. In the ninth century, the holy King Alfred the great. In the tenth century, St. Dustan, Archbishop of Canterbury. In the eleventh century, St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland. In the twelfth century, St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury and Doctor of the Church. In the thirteenth century, St. Francis of Assisi, the most lovable of all saints. In the fourteenth century, St. John Nepomucene, martyr for the Seal of Confession. In the fifteenth century, St. Bernadine of Siena, a great lover of our Lord. In the sixteenth century, St. Theresa, the great mystic and teacher of prayer. In the seventeenth century, blessed William Laud, the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury, who was made like our Lord in being despised and rejected of men even to this day. In the eighteenth century, the holy bishop of the Church, Thomas Ken. In the nineteenth century, a saintly Doctor of the Church, Edward Bouverie Pusey. In the twentieth century, the holy Bishop Grafton of Fond du Lac. And in every age, many other holy martyrs, confessors and virgins, for whose holy lives, thanks be to God.

What is a Saint? The term is used so much in derision these days and saintliness is so unpopular that we must have in mind the real meaning of the word. The church has agreed to restrict the title "Saint" to those persons who exercise virtue in a heroic degree. Essentially it means one who, having partaken of the sanctity of Christ through the Sacra-

ments, has lived a life of heroic faith in and self-sacrifice for God and His church.

There is a wicked opinion prevalent today that we must expect no one to be a Saint in the twentieth century. Yet the Bible says, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect. Most of St. Paul's Epistles are addressed to "those called to be Saints." This plainly shows what God expects of us; and, as a matter of fact, there are many Saints today, as there have always been, in God's Church. They are often known only to God. Their life is "hid with Christ in God." Hiddenness is characteristic of sanctity. Popularity and worldly glory is characteristic of the world's heroes. "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." But "by this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if the world hate you." The Saint suffers and dies and perhaps is forgotten except by God who "loves him and beautifies him with comely ornaments and clothes him with a robe of glory, and at the gates of Paradise He crowns him."

Of course the majority of the members of Christ's Body, the church, are far from being Saints. Sinners are the raw products out of which Saints are made by a process of refinement and purification through divine grace, and therefore sinners, or the raw products, must be plentiful in the church if Saints are plentiful. We have said that every Baptized person is at least on the way to become a Saint. If he continues to follow "that way" unto the end,

he will in eternity, if not in time, be "numbered with the Saints in glory everlasting."

But though few people attain heroic sanctity in this life, yet no one may enter heaven except he has been made perfect as the Saints are. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." (Rev. 21, verse 27.) So God in His loving pity, gives us a place of purification in the future life, a place intermediate to heaven and earth, and therefore known as the Intermediate State. In the Commendatory Prayer for the Dying in the Prayer Book, the Church suggests the name "purgatory" for this place of purgation. Many people dislike the term and use in its place the word "paradise" but paradise implies the Beatific Vision or heaven, as is obvious from our Lord's words to the dying thief on the cross: "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." Purgatory was certainly paradise when our Lord bereft of His human body, which lay in the grave, showed Himself "to the spirits in prison" in His God head and human soul.

This is not a treatise on eschatology and therefore these matters cannot be discussed fully. However, in order to make plain all that the Church believes about the Blessed Virgin and the holy Saints, it seems necessary at least to review Catholic truth under this point, for there is great ignorance and misunderstanding of the subject. To sum up, Catholics believe that the Church exists in three different parts. First, the Church Militant, here on earth, is the Church fighting the battle of holiness against

God's great enemy, the Devil and all his forces of evil. Secondly, the Church Expectant is the company of holy souls in the Intermediate State or purgatory, expecting to attain at last to the Beatific Vision, and therefore, in hope and love, gradually being cleansed from the effects of sin and being made ready for heaven or paradise. Thirdly the Church Triumphant in paradise or heaven is composed of the holy angels and all those souls who have been "made perfect through suffering" (Heb. 2, verse 10.) in this world or in purgatory, and are therefore blissfully dwelling in God's presence forever in enjoyment of the summum bonum, the greatest good that man can have, namely, the open vision of God or the Beatific Vision. These three parts of the church are spoken of in many passages of holy Scripture, e. g., "things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. 2, verse 10.)

The souls in purgatory are called "the Holy Souls." The souls in heaven "the holy Saints." The Holy Souls need our prayers (as we can see from I **Maccabees 12, verses** 42-46.) but we need the prayers of the holy Saints. (Cf. Jer. 15, **verse** 1. **Zech. 1, verse** 12. **Rev.** 5, **verse** 8). There is no great need for teaching on the subject of prayer for our holy dead. This war has taught us all many lessons about that. Surely there are few Churches today in the Anglican Communion where such prayers are not offered in some form. At any rate there is at least one prayer for the dead in the Burial Office: "We beseech Thee, that we, with all those who are de-

parted in the true Faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory." This is not explicitly a prayer for the dead, but the prayer is there, and shows the mind of the Church.

This holy practice is a Christian instinct. The great Father Stanton was wont to declare that, if we did not pray for our dead, we seemed to class them with the devil as past praying for. It certainly is strange that any Christian teacher should ever have been able to argue Christians out of this most Christian practice. In the Prayer for the Church Militant at Mass we say that God has taught us through St. Paul to make prayers and supplications for **all men.** This does not mean, all men except the dead. **(I Tim 2.)** Our Lord refused to draw such a distinction between the living and the dead when He insisted that the expression "God of Abraham" must be understood to mean that God is the God of the living. **(St. Mat. 22, verse 32.)** Even Maeterlink is able to say, "There are no dead." (The Blue Bird.) When we consider that the greater part of the Church is in purgatory and heaven, and that only a small part exists on earth, it is strange indeed to suppose that in the Body of Christ, the Communion of Saints, there is no definite relationship between the larger part of the Church beyond the veil and the smaller part on earth; or that, if there is, there is no definite and concrete way of expressing this relationship. Prayers for the dead and honor to the Saints is only the definite and concrete expression

of our belief in the reality of the existence of those who have gone on before.

The Commendatory Prayer.

O Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, after they are delivered from their earthly prisons; We humbly commend the soul of this thy servant, our dear brother, into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Savior; most humbly beseeching thee, that it may be precious in thy sight. Wash it, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was slain to take away the sins of the world; that whatsoever defilements it may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and naughty world, through the lusts of the flesh, or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it may be presented pure and without spot before thee; through the merits of Jesus Christ thine only Son our Lord.

Other Collects from the Prayer Book.

O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies can not be numbered; Make us, we beseech thee,deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and let thy Holy Spirit lead us through this vale of misery, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives: that, when we shall have served thee in our generation, we may be gathered unto our fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Catholic Church; in the confidence of a certain faith; in the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope;

in favor with thee our God, and in perfect charity with the world. All which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty and everlasting God, we yield unto thee most high praise and hearty thanks, for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all thy saints, who have been the choice vessels of thy grace, and the lights of the world in their several generations; most humbly beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow the example of their stedfastness in thy faith, and obedience to thy holy commandments, that at the day of the general Resurrection, we, with all those who are of the mystical body of thy Son, may be set on his right hand, and hear that his most joyful voice: Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

INSTRUCTION III.

I Believe in the Communion of Saints.

St. Paul, "the Doctor of the Gentiles and the Teacher of the Divine Law," says that there is one Mediator between God and man. We saw in Instruction I that the one Mediator has clothed Himself with a new body in addition to the body incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and that this new Body of Christ is the Catholic Church through which He mediates. In Instruction II we saw that the part

of the Body of Christ which is on earth is the Church Militant, but that the rest of the Church, and by far the largest part, is in purgatory and heaven. In this instruction we are to consider the close union which these three parts of the Body of Christ have with each other.

Mother Church teaches us, in the Apostle's Creed, to say: "I believe in the Communion of Saints." "Communion" means a close union. Since every member of the Catholic Church is called to be a Saint and is on "the way" to become a Saint, if he does not cut himself off from the life-giving Body by a mortal sin, we necessarily conclude that the phrase, "Communion of Saints," covers not only the Saints in heaven but also the Holy Souls in purgatory and the Faithful on earth who are Saints potentially, if not completely.

Speaking of the intimate union with Christ which the Church enjoys, St. Paul says: "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Speaking of the intimate union which each Christian has with every other, he says: "As the body is one, yet hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body, so is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles **** For the body is not one member but many **** And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you **** There should be no schism in the body **** the members should have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the Body of Christ, and severally members thereof." (I **Cor.** 12).

If these were not the words of the God-inspired Paul but of some modern Catholic teacher, what objections would be raised, what blasphemy would be imputed to them! To call the Church the **Body of Christ!** To identify it thus with incarnate God! Surely the only interpretation that will satisfy these extreme expressions without irreverence is to understand them as the Church understands them, namely, that by Baptism Christ has incorporated us into Himself, as members of His body, flesh and bones, and has made us a part of His mediatorial machine, and bound us all together, so that living or dead, we are in union with Him and with each other, as are the members of any living body.

Let us make a practical application of this truth. If you, a Christian, did not say your prayers this morning, the whole Body of Christ is proportionately weaker, and perhaps some poor little girl just Baptized from heathenism away off in China will suffer for your negligence. For if one member suffers, says St. Paul, all must suffer. Yesterday you committed a sin which no one knows about except yourself—and God. You said: "It will hurt no one but myself, for it concerns me alone." But that is a devilish lie. Your secret sin has wounded the Body of Christ and all must suffer. That is one reason why we **ought** (i. e., owe it) to make our

confessions to our priest, who is the member of Christ's Body set apart for that work. A sin that has hurt the Body of Christ should be absolved by the Body of Christ in the Sacrament of Penanace. The "New Thought" heretics are certainly teaching Catholic truth when they say that we all radiate either goodness or sinfulness and influence each other accordingly. Even to come into the presence of a Saint is a blessing but there are some people so imbued with sin that the mere sight of them has an evil effect. How much more, then, if we are all linked to one another by the invisible but organic ties of membership in the Body of Christ, does the individual secret sin of a Christian damage the corporate whole!

But if our sins affect the Church, so do our victories over sin. Perhaps one reason why an earnest Christian finds it so hard to overcome some venial sin, such as irritability or vainglorious thoughts, is that, since we are yoked up to a number of other souls by virtue of the Communion of Saints, we have to help along our weaker brother in order to make progress ourselves. At any rate, "no man liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself."

It is plain therefore that every holy person is a source of strength to the Church. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." **Rev. 2, verse 12.)** A pillar is both for strength and for beauty, to ornament God's Church and to uphold it. Every Saint is just this, a pillar of strength and of beauty,

whether he is a Saint on earth or a Saint in heaven. For physical death does not change people in their relationship to each other in the Body of Christ. Only spiritual death by a mortal sin can work any such change.

The modern idea, so prevalent everywhere among Christians, that physical death cuts us off from the dead, so that we may not pray for them or realize their sympathy for or their interest in us, is a wicked heresy, "plainly repugnant to God's word," and is producing a re-action toward "Spiritualism" and other forms of witchcraft and magic. The popularity of a book like Sir Oliver Lodge's Raymond clearly shows this. The only antidote for this paganizing tendency, which is being welcomed by some Christians today as a helpful side-light on Christianity, is the bold proclamation of all those truths and pious beliefs and practices concerning the Communion of Saints which have been the comfort of Christians in times of bereavement in all ages of the Catholic Church. This little book is meant to be a humble offering along these lines.

The Epistle to the Hebrews **(Chap. 12.)** has a beautiful metaphor. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." The Church Militant is a company of athletes striving for an eternal crown. The theatre in which they strive is packed with spectators, the Saints and Angels, who watch the

race with interest and help and encourage the participants in every way they can. May we not add that those athletes who have finished their race are taken into rest rooms, the Church Expectant, where they are made fit to go forth crowned among the victors who are now enthroned in the Church Triumphant taking sympathetic interest in the race of life?

This passage of holy scripture plainly shows that the Saints know something of what passes on earth and can sympathize with us. Also in St. Matthew (22, **verse** 30) our Lord says that the Saints "are as the Angels of God in heaven," and in St. Luke (15,**verse** 10) He says that "there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." If the Angels know about a sinner's repentance, so do the Saints. The holy Prophets were able also to forsee what was passing in distant places and intercede for God's people when they were in sin or need. In Exodus (**Chap.** 32) we have an example of this. Moses, because he was in the presence of God, at once prayed for the people, and at his prayer God spared them. Surely the Saints in heaven are no less enlightened than the Old Testament Prophets, and their power and desire of interceding will be greater, since they are nearer the Throne of God.

Does not St. Peter promise his prayers for the Church when he writes: "I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." (II **St. Pt. 1, verse** 15.)

In the Apocalypse (**Rev.** 6, **verse** 9) we have it plainly stated that the Saints in heaven intercede for the Church, and in Jeremiah (**Chap.** 15) we have God saying that even though the great Saints, Moses and Samuel, interceded, He would not make friends with His sinful people. These passages plainly show that the Saints are cognizant of our needs and that they pray for us. In fact, God wants to have an intercessor stand before Him for His people. (**Isa.** 59, **verse** 16). "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor."

If they are interested in us and know about us and intercede for us, why should we not ask them to pray for us? All Christians agree that it is right and useful to ask the prayers of holy persons living. It cannot be wrong or useless to ask the prayers of the Saints in heaven, now that they are so near to God and in no danger of offending Him. Moreover their wisdom and holiness will make their prayers especially acceptable to God. He might often grant their requests when He could not grant ours.

Of course, if anyone has the idea that when we ask the Saints to pray for us, we have, as it were, left the shrine of God and gone to pay our devotions before another shrine, such a person is practically guilty of polytheism. That is not the Catholic conception at all. Rather we think of it this way. Both the Saint and the person asking the Saint's prayers are kneeling together in God's presence, and the petitioner, without leaving God, turns to the Saint, and asks that holy one to join him in his petitions to

God. Asking a Saint for his prayers does not decrease prayer to God. It intensifies it, like forming a prayer circle here in this world and asking each member to help you in prayer. Invoking a Saint is strictly parallel to invoking the prayers of a brother Christian in this life.

The Anglican Church recognizes the intercession of Saints. In a prayer put forth by Convocation, the highest spiritual authority of the Church of England, in 1651 in honor of King Charles Stuart, she prayed thus:

"O Lord, we offer unto Thee all praise and "thanks for the glory of Thy grace that shined forth "in Thine annointed, our sovereign, King Charles: "and we beseech Thee to give us all grace, by a care- "ful, studious imitation of this Thy blessed Saint "and martyr, and all other Saints and martyrs that "have gone before us, that we may be made worthy "to receive benefits by their prayers, which they, in "communion with the Catholic Church, offer up unto " Thee for that part of it militant, through thy Son, "our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ."

An objection often raised to this holy practice is that it places the Saint between God and man as a mediator but this objection has no real foundation. The mediation of Jesus Christ is a mediation of redemption, due to His own work and merits. A Saint is merely an intercessor who is only able to plead with God because that mediation of redemption is all the while being carried on by the one Mediator. In view of all that has been said on this point in these

instructions, further comment would be foolish. Yet, in spite of this fear of calling the Saints mediators, Moses said: "I stood between the Lord and you at that time." **(Dt. 5, verse 5.)** In the limited sense of an intercessor, then, even Moses, the meekest man, may call himself a mediator without in any way detracting from the power and office of the one mediator.

It is customary to bewail the death of a holy man with the words: "What a power for good he would have been if he had lived." But the Church has not lost him or his power of holiness by death. He has merely shifted from one part of the Church to another. His example is still before the Church. His holiness is still in the Church. His activity for the Church's weal is still as untiring. Now he will pray for the church without ceasing. Indeed, since "prayer is power," and s ince our Lord wills to work many things out only through prayer, and since there is very little praying done on earth in this materialistic age, it would seem that the Church is living and working on the power produced by the Saints in heaven. Where else does it come from?

But if the Saints help us by their holiness and their prayers, we also have certain duties to them. Christian justice demands that we honor them. They are holy. They reflect Christ. "Honor to whom honor is due." It is for this reason that the Church has set apart days in their honor. It would be unjust not to honor them. Again, Christian love demands that we love them. They are our brothers

and sisters in the Faith. "I, John, who also am your companion in tribulation." Christian humility would at least suggest that we desire the help of their prayers and express it. We ought to feel that St. Paul, that the Blessed Virgin, etc., are our friends. This is as much a part of the Christian duty as it is to love the neighbor who lives across the street. Who will deny that such a friendship as this will be a blessing and a means of grace? Who can fail to see the comfort in believing that "we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses" who love us and encourage us by their sympathy and prayers to persevere in running the race until we come to "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Collect in Honor of All Saints.

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect in Honor of Saint Michael and All Angels.

O everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order; Mercifully grant that, as thy holy Angels always do thee service in heaven, so, by thy appointment, they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect in Honor of the Conversion of Saint Paul.

O God, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect in Honor of Saint John the Evangelist.

Merciful Lord, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy Church, that it, being instructed by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist Saint John, may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

INSTRUCTION IV.

The Communion of the Saints.

Among all those holy souls that are united to each other in the Body of the one Mediator, Mary sits enthroned as Queen of the Angels and the Saints This necessarily follows from a belief in her incomparable dignity as Mother of the incarnate Son of God. It has always been believed in the Church that she was chosen to be His Mother because she was the most fit for this honor. As someone has said: "She was able to conceive Christ in her womb because she had first conceived Him in her heart." When our Lord seemed to rebuke those who told

Him that His Mother and brethren stood without by saying that spiritual relationships were nearer to Him than ties of flesh and blood [St. Mark 3, verse 31], He did not in any way derogate from her dignity. He simply called attention to the fact that she was nearest to Him in spirit even as she was in the flesh.

All the honor given to the Blessed Virgin by men does not equal the smallest of those countless acts of honor given her by her divine Son during that period in which He lived under her care. Do we not read that he was subject unto her? If he honored her it is surely a dishonor to Him when we refuse to give her honor. It is not too much to say that there are some people who, in their prejudice against Catholicism, actually dislike the Blessed Virgin. They think of her as a shockingly popish person. Let us remember what suffering was caused the blessed Mother by her share in the incarnation. Think how she stood underneath the Cross without complaint and saw her Son die for us sinners. Should we not honor and love her for this?

Mother of mercy, day by day
My love to thee grows more and more:
Thy gifts are strewn upon my way
Like sands upon the great sea-shore.

But scornful men have coldly said
Thy love was leading me from God;
And yet in this I did but tread
The very path my Saviour trod.

They know but little of thy worth
Who speak these heartless words to me,
For what did Jesus love on earth
One half so tenderly as thee?

Jesus, when His three hours were run,
Bequeathed thee from the Cross to me;
And Oh! how can I love thy Son,
Sweet Mother, if I love not thee?
(Fr. Faber of the Oratory.)

All Catholics, whether they are Anglicans, Romans or Orthodox, agree in certain beliefs about the Blessed Virgin. First, they all agree that she is the greatest and holiest of the Saints. Secondly, they all agree that she was given special graces of wisdom, courage, illumination, etc., so as to enable her to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith she was called" as Mother of God. She would need these for the awful responsibility of motherhood to the Holy Child. She had to act as His tutor, friend and adviser. To her, by divine appointment, He gave entire obedience. Such an office required special grace. Thirdly, they all agree that she was delivered from original sin, either by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost when "the Word was made flesh" in her womb or by a special intervention of God at her conception. This latter idea, "the Immaculate Conception," is held as a pious opinion in the Orthodox Churches and by many Anglicans, but it is taught as a truth revealed by God, and therefore as neces-

sary to salvation, by the Roman Church. It has been criticised by some theologians as having no basis in early tradition or in Holy Scripture. Fourthly, they all agree that the Blessed Virgin was never guilty of actual sin. Because of her entire and heroic dedication to the will of God, God gave her such special grace that she was never overcome by any sin, even the smallest, in order that she might be a fit Mother for His Son. She thus was free from venial sin. Fifthly they all agree that she always remained a Virgin. Hence she is known as the "Ever-Virgin." Sixthly, they all agree to call her "Mother of God," a title given her officially by the Church in the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431, as a protection against the heresy which teaches that the Son Whom she bore was not God but mere man. This false teaching is prevalent today, and therefore it is well to call attention to the decree of this Ecumenical Council. "If anyone refuse to confess that Emannuel is truly God, and that therefore the holy Virgin is the Mother of God, since she brought forth according to the flesh the Word of God made flesh **** let Him be anathema." Along with the rest of Catholic Christendom, the Anglican Church accepts this Council, and therefore this decree binds the conscience of every member of the American Episcopal Church. To call the Blessed Virgin "Mother of God" does not mean that she produced the Godhead, which would be blasphemous, but that her Son is God. It is strictly comparable to our saying that Mrs. Jones is the mother of Jimmie Jones. We do not mean that

Mrs. Jones produced her son's immortal soul but that she is the mother of the humanity that enshrines the person, Jimmie Jones. So Mary is the Mother of the Sacred Humanity, which enshrines the Person of God. Seventhly, the belief that after death the body of the Mother of God did not decay but was raised up in resurrection and t aken to heaven, is a pious opinion so universal among Catholics that he who denies it must be either a very learned scholar with special illuminations or else a very reckless and conceited person thus to oppose himself to the consensus of opinion of the whole Church which, as we know, is indwelt and guided into all the truth by God the Holy Spirit. [St. Jno. 16, verse 13].

Some modern Biblical students have tried to impugn the Church's belief respecting the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God. There are certain persons mentioned in Holy Scripture as brothers and sisters of our Lord. Much has been written on this subject, and many are the theories pro and con. One of the most helpful accounts from a Catholic point of view is by a Priest of the Church, Dr. Sadler, in his Commentary on St. Mark [page 428, Excursus II]. Whatever the expression of "Brethren of the Lord" may mean, Catholics are certain it does not mean that they are children of our Lady after the flesh and half-brothers of our Lord. The strongest argument against this heretical theory is the fact that our Lord, from the Cross, gave His blessed Mother into the charge of St. John and not into the care of one of His so-called brothers. At any rate

it is unthinkable to Catholics that the womb of Mary, the shrine of the Godhead, should ever become a dwelling place for mere man, or that one so dedicated to the purposes of God in redeeming the world, should ever step aside from that vocation to the ordinary relationship of holy marriage. What reason was there for it? Human passion is sacred when God calls people to it in order to carry on the human race and the Church. But Mary was called to be the Mother of God. The many passages in Scripture, the Creeds and the Prayer Book where she is called a Virgin, seem to necessitate a belief in the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin, and the Church has always so understood them. This doctrine is considered to be "of faith," i. e., a part of revealed truth which we are all bound to accept.

The majority of Anglicans do not hold the Immaculate Conception. Anglicans are too busy defending the Sacraments and the Incarnation and bringing souls to believe in them to have time to consider the subject carefully. Probably most of those who have examined the subject would agree with Dean Church who said that there were no materials in the world out of which to construct such a belief. In a book meant to be for devotional use it is impossible to go into this subject in detail. Let each person decide for himself, since the Church has not spoken, and treat with respect the opinion of others. The Immaculate Conception theory is that the Blessed Virgin, from the first moment of her conception in her mother's womb, was kept free

from original sin by a special intervention of God but that it was done only by virtue of the Saviour's forseen merits. In other words, it was done for our Saviour's sake and, through His redemption. This doctrine makes it easier to account for the fact that our Lord took from His Mother a spotless Humanity.

There are two ways of regarding the Mother of God among Catholics. The prevalent conception of her among Romans seems to be almost that she was a special creation of God. If some of the language current among Roman writers be taken at its face value, it would seem to mean that our Lady was created in view of a special work for God with preternatural gifts as well as supernatural gifts. In this way she becomes less and less human and more and more a creature "sui generis." Some of Fr. Faber's books give this impression. Now this tendency in theology has much to commend it but it may easily be carried so far that our Lady becomes, not the greatest of her race but— be it said reverently, in order to explain the idea—almost a monstrosity.

Among Anglicans it is customary to make much of the human side of our Lady's life. Her response to vocation and her growth in grace as a result of struggle and of that response are the ideas stressed. When the fact of divine predestination from the other theory is interwoven with this, one has the truth of both sides. But this tendency can produce just as evil results as the other. The Church's Faith about the perpetual virginity and even the

Virgin Birth of our Lord are denied by those who carry the second theory too far. The two tendencies need to check and correct each other.

This brings us to the vexed point as to whether the cultus of our Lady has not been carried too far often times. Doubtless. Every good thing is abused. Has it not done injury to true religion? Perhaps. But a careful study of the subject during every period of Church history shows that it has produced great good also. Chivalry and respect for the position of woman, is largely the result of what the Protestant would term Mariolatry. Moreover there is never any denial of our Saviour's Godhead, like the widespread denial of it among educated, upper-class Protestants, among those who have been taught, even if in an exaggerated form, devotion to the Virgin. The sole reason for honoring the Blessed Virgin is that she is the Mother of God. We could not honor her thus if her Son was mere man. Consequently honoring our Lady is not only one way of honoring the incarnation but also so much a part of belief in it that it may be considered an outpost of the citadel. If the outpost is taken the citadel has lost a defense.

In a constructive devotional treatise, such as this is intended to be, it would not serve the purpose to enter the realm of polemics and inveigh against certain forms of devotion current among both the Orthodox and Romans which seem exaggerated to us Anglicans. The Italianism of the Roman Church and the orientalism of the Orthodox Churches would

naturally express itself in hyperbolical form. But some teaching about our Lady goes beyond hyperbole. The theory that, if our Lord is the Head of the Church, His Mother is the neck through which all graces come to the Body, seems a wrong and wicked theory to us. There is a strange mis-translation in the Vulgate which may be mentioned here to show how this extreme view of our Lady's position has arisen. In Genesis the King James version has "It [i. e., the Seed of the woman] shall bruise thy head" but in the Vulgate we find "She [i. e., the Virgin] shall bruise thy head."

The Church has carefully guarded against undue honor to the Saints. The honor paid to the Saints, she says, is "dulia." That paid to God is "latria." That is, the honor paid to God and the honor paid to the Saints is not merely different in degree but in kind. "Latria" means **adoration.** "Dulia means **veneration.** To the Virgin Mother of God "hyperdulia," or the highest kind of veneration is given. Catholics sometimes speak of worshipping a Saint, but when they do they use the word as it was commonly used in olden times, and still is used in the marriage service of the Church of England as expressing devotion, not latria. The word "mariolatry" means offering latria to Mary, a thing which all Catholics would vehemently deny, even if their devotions were extreme.

However, if, as we saw in Instruction IV, the Saints love us and help us by their prayers, who would not desire the prayers of the greatest of the

Saints? We naturally feel that the close relationship between the Mother and Son would make her the most powerful of all intercessors. It is this belief which underlies the request for our Lady prayers. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

It would take volumes to do justice to this subject. In conclusion, nevertheless, it is well to survey the place our Lady has in the types and symbols of holy scripture. Everywhere in the Bible we find Christ, and everywhere by His side, we find His Mother.

Our Lord is the second Adam of a new creation by grace. Our Lady is the second Eve, the Mother of a regenerated humanity. He is the true Noah, who peoples the world with a new and spiritual family through Baptism and she is the ark whence He comes forth. He is the manna, she is the golden vessel which contains it. The virgin soil of Paradise out of which grows the tree of life, the burning bush not consumed, the fleece of Gideon drenched with heavenly dew, the house of God, filled with His glory, —these and many others, are symbols of our Lady. Deborah, Esther and Judith who saved the people of God in old time by their devotion to God's cause are likewise types of the same holy Mother of the Saviour. The Song of Songs, which the Church, following the Jewish Church before her, has always interpreted of the love between God and the soul, is

fulfilled most nearly in the close relationship between the Blessed Virgin and her Divine Son.

Ave Maria! thou whose name
All but adoring love may claim,
Yet may we reach thy shrine;
For He, thy Son and Saviour, vows
To crown all lowly lofty brows
With love and joy like thine.

—Rev. John Keble.

PART III. MEDITATIONS.

The meditations are for the most part on the titles of our Lady given her by the Church in the "Litany of the Blessed Virgin." These titles sum up, in the Church's own words, the chief graces, characteristics, and offices of our Lady. The Litany referred to will be found on last pages.

MEDITATION I.

The Litany begins, as all the Church's Litanies do, except the one in the Prayer Book, with a threefold invocation of the Holy Trinity. Three are the enemies of the soul, the world, the flesh and the devil. So the Church teaches us in her solemn Litanies, or general supplications for grace and help, to make a triple invocation of God, one to each of the Three Persons in God. We ask Each One for "mercy," a general term, covering forgiveness, grace and restoration,—in fact all our needs.

We then turn to our Lord Jesus, the one Mediator, who is the Incarnate Expression of God the Holy Trinity in terms of flesh and sense and time; and by His Name of Christ, which is the Name of His office as Mediator, we invoke Him to hear us. Because "He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities," we know He will receive us graciously. So we pray: "O Christ hear us! O Christ graciously hear us."

The Litany then proceeds to the words with

which our Prayer Book Litany begins: "O God, the Father of Heaven." Gaining confidence by the the knowledge that Christ has graciously heard us, we now approach God the Father, and, conscious of our union with His Son, the one Mediator, by virtue of which we have been made the Father's children, we dare to call Him by that Name, at once the most tender and the most august, "Father." We add "of heaven" because, since we are His children, heaven is our home, and we are "strangers and pilgrims" in this wicked world. With this glance toward heaven, we now turn our eyes to earth. The poor sin-laden, suffering world! In quick compassion we cry out: "O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us." But at once there comes to us the sense of God's presence in the world. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church in order, through it, to save the world. "O God Holy Ghost, have mercy upon us." We call Him "Holy" because it is His office to make the world holy. Summing up all these thoughts and aspirations in a word we say in conclusion: "O Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy upon us."

The chief mysteries of the faith are thus set forth in the opening sentences of the Litany. We do not know why Mother Church has shortened the Prayer Book version of it, but in that version of it these same ideas are set forth in other places. There are no prayers so perfect as the Church's prayers. They come to us with an inspiration only less than that of Holy Scripture. With great profit we can meditate on them often.

MEDITATION II.

Holy Mary Pray for Us.

When we say this Litany we are kneeling before the Throne of God. We do not now leave the Throne of God and go to the Throne of Mary. Kneeling on still in God's presence, we cry out to Mary to come and help us in our supplications. Invoking the Saints does not decrease prayer to God but increases it, for it joins to our feeble, ignorant prayer, the glorious intercession of a Saint who has been made perfect in the grace and wisdom of Jesus. Realizing our union, then, which we have one with another in the Communion of Saints, we seek our Lady's assistance in our prayers, and begin by invoking her holy name.

If the name of the Forerunner of our Lord was announced by St. Gabriel, may not the name of Mary have been so announced? At any rate in Holy Scripture names are always treated as sacred and significant. What does the name "Mary" mean? Scholars give various answers.

The first occurrence of the name in Holy Scripture, and the only occurrence of it in the Old Testament, is as the name of Moses' sister, Miriam. Mary is the English form of this Hebrew word [Ex. 15:20]. But Miriam received her name in Egypt, as did Moses and Aaron. If it is an Egyptian word it may mean "cherished" or "beloved." Our Lady was cherished and beloved of God, as we read: "Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with

thee;" Fear not Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." [St. Luke 1:28, 30]. She was **cherished** by Him because He was **beloved** by her. Moreover, she cherished her Son, who is called in the Bible the "Beloved One." Because she was the best of mothers, she also was cherished by Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God.

In the New Testament we have an Aramaic word, "Maranatha," meaning "the Lord cometh." (1 Cor. 16-22). The first part of the word, "Mara," means "Lord." Some have thought Miriam is a feminine form of this word. If that be the case, Mary means "Our Lady." The reader can see many devout implications in this phrase. She is the ideal and perfect lady of Christian life. She is the gentle mistress of our Lord's castle, the Church. She is the "first lady of the land—God's land, the Promised Land of redemption. She is the ideal of loveliness for every woman and the patron saint of purity for every man.

MEDITATION III.

Holy Mary Pray for Us.

In some parts of the Church a feast is kept in honor of Mary's name. There was also an ancient custom of inclining the head slightly when this name was pronounced, so tenderly was it loved, even as we incline, though more deeply, at the sacred Name, Jesus.

Some scholars have suggested that the name, Mary, is derived from a Hebrew word meaning fat

or well-nourished. Such an idea as this, according to the Scriptural use of metaphors, would indicate that plentitude of grace which God has bestowed upon the blessed Mother, or perhaps, the beautiful and perfect one. "Thou art beautiful, O my love." "Who is she that looked forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun?" [Song of Songs].

St. Jerome traces our Lady's name to mean "a bitter sea." Does this not recall to us the bitter sea of tears wept by poor Eve and her descendants as the result of sin? and also "the deep waters of the proud that had gone even over our soul," "if the Lord had not been on our side when men rose up against us?" and the terrible waters of our Lord's death and passion which engulfed Him and His Mother, as we say in a Psalm of the Passion: "Save Me, O God: for the waters are come in, even unto my soul; I stick fast in the deep mire where no ground is: I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run over Me? [Ps. 69].

Another derivation that St. Jerome gives is "a drop of the sea." The famous name for our Lady, "Maris Stella," star of the sea, as we have it in one of her most popular hymns, was probably coined by St. Jerome as "Stilla Maris," drop of the sea, and afterwards corrupted into "Stella Maris." [Cf. Is. 40-15]. This strange title of our Lady would refer to her humility and lowliness, of which she spoke in her Magnificat: "Thou hast regarded the lowliness of thy handmaiden." "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty," says St. Paul.

MEDITATION IV.

Holy Mother of God.

The Athanasian Creed says: "It is necessary to everlasting salvation that one also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ." No man can believe rightly concerning the Incarnation if he thinks slightingly of the Mother of God, on whom, as we have seen, the Church, in Council assembled, has solemnly and officially conferred this greatest of all human titles. The whole of the Christian religion depends upon the doctrine of the Incarnation. If ur Lord is not true God, "begotten before all worlds" by eternal generation, He has no power to forgive sins or dispense grace. If He is not true Man, "born of the Virgin Mary," He is not our Sin-bearer and Saviour. His blessed Mother had no other purpose in life than to be His Mother. We know that God creates each soul for some high destiny in this world which He will reveal to the soul in due time if He is given the right sort of a chance to do so. "All souls are Mine saith the Lord." Of course it may not be a high destiny in the world's sight. It may be one of hiddenness, suffering and labor. From all eternity God has planned out your life, your place in His scheme of things, and He has given you just those gifts which will fit you for that purpose. If you have found out what He wants you to do, you have found your vocation. "Vocation" means "God's call." Mary was planned from all eternity for the sole work of being "the Mother of Jesus." She responded to God's call. Henceforth

the oblioquy of those who cast aspersions on her character over the strange birth of her Son, the household drudgery, the poverty, the suffering, became a great and holy thing. She did it all and bore it all at God's call. How you and I can transfigure our lives, whether they be lives of drudgery or not, if we only live in response to God's call! The blacksmith, the cook or the ditch-maker are doing something grand and noble in God's sight if they are doing it for Him. Our Lord Himself was a carpenter.

Let Us Pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost didst wonderfully prepare both the body and the soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary to become a fit habitation for Thy Son: Grant that we who rejoice in her commemoration may be delivered by her fervent intercession from present evils and everlasting death. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

MEDITATION V.

Holy Virgin of Virgins.

This expression is the Hebrew form of the superlative. It means that our Lady is the greatest of all virgins. Virginity is the perfection of chastity, and our Lady is the perfection of virginity itself. As a virgin she is in a class alone. Virginity was indispensible to one called to be the Mother of God. In the story of her life we have read that she early took a vow to be a perpetual virgin, and her words

of surprise to the Archangel, "How can this be, seeing that I know not man?" are taken to mean, how can I become a mother when I am vowed to be a virgin?

Among the Jews, God's chosen people, virginity was despised because every woman aspired to be the mother of the Messiah. It was therefore considered a disgrace to be childless. Our Lady was the first virgin, so to speak. She made virginity to be a very high state of life. During the so-called dark ages, when men's rude and wicked passions were in such evidence, there were everywhere virgin souls both of men and women who in memory of our Lady had dedicated themselves to God and made themselves "Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake;" and even now, in the midst of the materialism of this age, thousands of men and women are following the example of our Lady's virginity.

Of course they cannot do this without the help of our Lord Jesus, the King of virgins. The sacred Body and Blood which he took from the Virgin is given to us in the Sacrament of the Altar to be our Food and Drink. Nourished by such Angel's Food, it is possible even for poor weak humankind, when they are called to this highest estate (I. Cor. 7: 8, 9, 25, 26), to be as the angels "who neither marry nor are given in marriage" and thus to imitate the virgin Mother of the King of virgins.

Let Us Pray.

O God, who has bestowed upon mankind the

rewards of eternal salvation, by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary: grant, we beseech thee, that we may be sensible of the intercession of her through whom thou hast counted us worthy to receive the Author of life, Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord. Amen.

MEDITATION VI.

Mother of Christ.

Have you ever considered that "in the Face of Jesus Christ" there were reflected the features of the Blessed Virgin's face! (II. Cor. 4:6). From her He took His sacred Humanity, and if there are any individual traits and expressions which belong to perfect Man, those He would receive, according to God's law of heredity, from His Mother.

Consider also what honor Christ must have paid to His holy Mother. Saint Methodius of Tyre, who died A. D. 312, is often quoted as saying: "We owe all debts to God, but to thee Mary, He Himself is indebted Who said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother.' That He might fulfill His own law, and exceed all men in its observance, He paid all honor and grace to His own Mother."

If God is "more ready to hear than we to pray," as the Church teaches us in a beautiful collect, what joy it must give our Lord Christ to hear and answer the prayers of His Mother Mary for us. Belief in this has been one of the great reasons for invoking her prayers. The poets of the medieval Church were fond of saying that our Lord would deny his holy

Mother nothing that she thought fit to ask. We are told that God often does not hear us because we ask amiss. (Jas. 4:3.) Surely if anyone has the mind of Christ and can ask aright, it is His Mother.

"Christ" is a Greek word meaning "The Anointed One." Messiah is the Hebrew form of it. Prophets, priests and kings were anointed to their office, and oil is a symbol in holy Scripture of consecration by the Holy Ghost. At His Baptism our Lord was especially anointed by the Holy Ghost for His work. He is our King because He has taught us the law of love by which Christians live, and also because He rules the Church which is the Kingdom of God. He is our Prophet, teaching us from the pulpit of the Cross the lessons of patience, self-denial and mortification by which alone we can attain to His likeness. He is our Priest because of the great sacrifice which He offered on the Altar of the Cross for us, in which he was both the Priest and the Victim. In the pleading and re-presentation of that Sacrifice which we have on our Altars here in the Church below, He gives himself to us as our Eucharistic Prophet, Priest and King. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

Let Us Pray.

O God, Who in this wonderful Sacrament hast left unto us a perpetual memorial of Thy Passion: grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood that we may ever perceive within ourselves the fruit of Thy Redemp-

tion; Who livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen.

MEDITATION VII.

Mother of Divine Grace.

Our Lady is rightly called the Mother of divine grace for two reasons. First, God poured down upon her many graces because of her complete dedication of herself to Him and because of her vocation to become His Mother. Theologians tell us that there are two different kinds of grace. There is the kind of grace which sanctifies us personally and helps us to overcome sin; and again there is the kind of grace which God gives people in order to make them helpful to others, e. g., the grace He gives men to make them preachers or teachers. This second kind of grace does not necessarily sanctify. Our Lady had a plentitude of both kinds of grace. She was personally sanctified, and she was given certain special graces which she did not need for herself but for fulfilling the office of Mother of God.

Secondly, our Lady is the Mother of divine grace because she is the Mother of our Lord, Who is the author and giver of all grace. He "suffered, being tempted" by the devil and He overcame "that old Serpent" on every occasion. We are told that He was tempted in **all points** like as we, and therefore we know that He overcame every kind of temptation that there is. As the result of this there was stored up in our dear Lord's human soul, as in a

great reservoir of grace, every kind of power to overcome sin that man needs. Through the seven Sacraments which He has ordained, He dispenses this grace to us. What is your besetting sin? Jesus overcame that for you, and this very moment the grace you need in order to overcome that sin is waiting in His soul for you. If you have not received it, it is because you have not sought it aright.

Let Us Pray.

We beseech Thee O Lord, pour Thy grace into our hearts: that as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an Angel, so by His Cross and Passion we may be brought into the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

MEDITATION VIII.

Mother Most Pure.

What is purity? The absence of indulgence in impurity? Is it a negative virtue? Not at all. Purity is the perfect consecration of our affections and passions to God. It is a positive virtue. The best symbol of purity is not white but red. Purity is a flaming fire of love for God, in the midst of which nothing unclean can exist. It is one of the special virtues of Christianity. Outside of our holy religion it is not considered possible for men to be virgin. There can be no double standard with the true follower of Jesus Christ. Because men are "the

stronger sex" they ought to be purer, they ought to have more ability to mortify themselves and overcome the flesh.

God calls each Christian to purity according to his vocation. There is the purity of the child, the purity of young manhood, the purity of bachelorhood, the purity of married life, the purity of widowhood, the purity of virginity, and greatest and highest of all vocations given by God, there is the purity of His Mother.

"To have a virgin soul is to love nothing on earth in comparison of God, or except for His sake," says Newman. "That soul is virginal which is ever looking for its Beloved, Who is in heaven, and which sees Him in whatever is lovely upon earth, loving earthly things very dearly, but in their proper place, as His gifts, and His representatives, but loving Jesus alone with sovereign affection, and bearing to lose all that she may keep Him."

"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." We see God, not by physical sight, but by the devotion of our hearts; and that devotion is proportionate to our purity. The purer we are the more we see of God in everything. How hard it is for the impure to pray or understand God's dealings with them! Impurity blinds. That is a false and wicked idea that knowledge gained by sin is useful in the spiritual life. It is only virtue that is wise. Vice is blind both to the power and value of virtue and to the hideousness and evil of sin. Jesus Christ became Man that we might become Godlike.

"I can do all things through Christ Who strengthenest me."

MEDITATION IX.

Mother Most Chaste.

All Christians realize the beauty of chastity, but vowed chastity, such as it is believed our Lady's was, is thought little of today. Monks and Nuns are considered to be relics of the dark ages. If they are not hypocrites, living in veiled sin, they are at least useless burdens on the world, working no good. People who think thus are always people who have a low conception of morals and of prayer. In the realm of morals they are the sort who say that a young man must have "his fling," or that "God does not require this and that of us." In the realm of prayer, they are the people who do not pray except as a last resort, as a grasping at straws. Consequently they are not able to appreciate the power of a life dedicated in chastity to prayer.

We have seen in the instructions how every member of the Church is bound up with every other member, and how the prayer of one or the sin of one affects the whole Body and each member of the Body. What the American Episcopal Church needs most today is not more activity or wealth but people who will pray, people who will dedicate themselves in self-denial to God. The highest form of self-denial next to martyrdom is virginity or celibacy. A sister is not an "old maid" nor is a celibate priest a bachelor. Souls dedicated to God by a vowed chas-

tity are souls who believe the life of holy marriage to be a most sacred and joyful one, sanctified by our Lord and His Mother in the Holy Family's life at Nazareth, but who, out of love for God and the good of His Church, **voluntarily** give up the joys of this holy estate and bind themselves by a vow of marriage to God. This is done to fulfill many Scriptural injunctions, such as: "As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall Thy Sons marry Thee [Is. 62:5].

Such dedication has an effect on morals. It shows that God's grace is sufficient for every one to be chaste according to his calling in either the chastity of marriage or in the more difficult chastity of continence. Moreover, the greatest effect which this vowed estate of chastity has upon the Church. is in increasing the power and purity of the whole Body of the Church. Every individual fighting his sins is helped by the dedication to God in chastity of those vowed to Him. "If one member of the Body of Christ be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

MEDITATION X.

Mother Inviolate and Undefiled.

Our Lady is called "Mother Inviolate" because she was the perfect Mother. We can picture her busy in the kitchen, busy over the clothes of her Son our Lord, always happy, always diligent, always efficient. That was her vocation, to be the Mother of the Holy family.

This title was probably given our Lady primarily because of the belief that, inasmuch as she was free from all sin, she therefore was also free from pain, which is the result of sin, as far as might be. For example, some suppose she gave birth to our Lord without any pain, and that her death was without pain, because the pains of childbirth and of death are said to be the result of sin (Gen. 3). God planned His world without sorrow, sickness or death. These are all made by sin, at least in their penal aspect. Consequently some writers speaks of the birth of our Lord as the Sun coming forth from His chamber through glass doors which do not need to be opened for Him.

Mother Undefiled.

St. Paul tells us that God wishes to prepare for Himself a spotless Church. (Eph. 5:27). Therefore we may be sure that His Mother was spotless. St. Bernard says: "There is no place in the world of greater dignity than the temple of the Virgin's womb, in which Mary conceived the Son of God; nor in heaven is there any place of higher dignity than the royal throne on which Her Son has exalted Mary." In the Song of Songs we apply these words to our Lady: Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away **** come with Me from Lebanon My spouse." Lebanon is covered with snow and is therefore glistening white in its stainlessness. Mary is glistening white with holiness. She is fair

and undefiled with the beauty imparted by the Holy Ghost.

Let Us Pray.

O God, whose Blessed Son was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil and make us the Sons of God and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beseech Thee, that having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as He is pure; that when He shall appear again with power and great glory we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom, where with thee O Father, Thee O Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth ever one God, world without end. Amen.

MEDITATION XI.

Mother Most Amiable and Most Admirable.

The word amiable means two things, worthy of love and loving. Our Lady is the most worthy of love among all human beings and also the most loving. When we consider how she shared her Son's Passion, how she saw Him die upon the Cross and never complain against us sinners who were the cause of that death, we can see what a loving heart, most like her Son's of all other human hearts, God has given her. The essence of Christianity is love, and the Son Whom Mary bore is Incarnate Love, for God is love. It was necessary that, when He chose a woman to be His Mother, she must be "most amiable."

It is because she is so loving that she is worthy of love. People who wish to gain the love of their

fellow men must themselves cultivate love. The love of which St. Paul speaks when he says, "Love suffereth long and is kind, love envieth not***but beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things," is the kind of love which makes people irresistable. That is a good description of the Blessed Virgin's love.

Mother Most Admirable.

Our Lady is admirable because she deserves to be admired. The Church holds her up to us as the supreme example of what grace can do in the human soul. The same God and the same grace and the same Faith is at work in our lives. We never can attain to Mary's stainlessness or to the place she occupies in heaven, but we too are called to such a state of holiness as many make us beautiful in the sight of God. He admires Mary, He admires all His Saints, for He sees in them a reflection of Himself. Are we striving so to live for God that at last He may see something of Himself in us to admire?

MEDITATION XII.

Mother of Good Counsel: Mother of Our Saviour and Creator.

Counsel is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, as the Prayer Book Office tells us, seven gifts are given to us. When the Holy Ghost anointed Christ at His Baptism, He poured forth upon the sacred Humanity a plentitude of His power. Our Lord now pours

forth upon us through the sacrament of Baptism and Confirmation such a measure of His Holy Spirit as we are spiritually fit to receive. The blessed Mother had received in an eminent degree the virtue of counsel. Good sense is a marked characteristic of everything that she did. If people realized that "sanctified commonsense" is a gift which God gives us in the sacrament of Confirmation, they would esteem the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost more highly than they do.

Mother of Our Creator.

It is unusual for us to think of Jesus Christ as the Creator. Yet the Nicene Creed, speaking of our Lord Jesus, says "By Whom all things were made." There are also many passages in Holy Scripture which imply the same thing, notably the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Of course God the Father is the Creator, but He created all things through His Son by the power of the Holy Ghost. Each person of the Blessed Trinity entered into the act of creation. The condescension of our Lord's obedience to Mary is seen to be the more wonderful when we consider that He was the Creator obeying His creature. What a lesson in humility and obedience it is for us!

Mother of Our Saviour.

As soon as we call our Lady the Mother of our Creator, which title brings to mind the dignity of

her office, the Church starightway teaches us to call her the Mother of our Saviour, Who saved us from sin by the humiliation of Himself and all His friends. Our Lady was too well learned in Holy Scripture not to know that the Messiah was described as the Man of Sorrows. Her vocation was not only to be great but to be humble; not only to have joy in her Son but to have sorrow; not only to hold in her arms a great King to Whom other kings came from far to bow down but also to be the sorrowful Mother at the foot of the Cross.

MEDITATION XIII.

Virgin Most Prudent.

The four cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. The word cardinal means a hinge. They are "hinge" virtues because upon them our spiritual life hinges. Yet they are not supernatural virtues. Even the heathen may possess these virtues in an eminent degree. When people tell you that it is possible to be as good outside the Church as in it, they are thinking of a goodness which is purely natural and which consists of the cardinal virtues only. The theological virtues, so-called because they are God-ward virtues, are the supernatural virtues. It is the characteristics of faith, hope and love that make us saints. Faith, however, must be built up on the cardinal virtues or it will be mere superstition. Hope degenerates into mere enthusiasm if it is not controlled by the cardinal virtues. Love may be mere selfishness or

emotion without the proper foundation of the cardinal virtues. How often we see Christians who are well meaning but hopelessly imprudent in their devotion to religion. Such person need to cultivate this cardinal virtue which the Blessed Virgin possessed in such a wonderful degree. They have already received it in germ if they have been Confirmed.

We see the prudence of our Lady in the fact that she did not try to explain to St. Joseph how she came to be with child. It was God's business to explain that and God did. Worldly prudence would have dictated that she make such explanation but her prudence had been supernaturalized by grace. Our Lord says, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

Let Us Pray.

God, Who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort. Through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, Who livest and reignest God world without end. Amen.

MEDITATION XIV.

Virgin Right Venerable.

It is a matter of truth and justice that we give "honor to whom honor is due." [Rom. 13:7]. Every Saint ought to be venerated because every Saint,

according to the capacity God has given him [Cor. 15:41], is a reflection of the holiness of Christ. We should honor goodness anywhere we see it, for goodness is God. "Blessed be God in His Angels and His Saints." Our Lady is the Queen of all Saints, and therefore is the most deserving of veneration. We have seen that we offer her, not "dulia," as the honor paid to Saints is called, but "hyperdulia," the highest kind of honor that may be paid to a creature. Divine honor, or the adoration given to God, is not merely greater in degree than this but greater in kind. It is not "dulia" at all, but "latria." We adore God because He alone is adorable: we venerate the Saints because God is in them.

Te Laudant Angeli.

The Angels praise thee, O holy Mother of God, who hast not known man, yet barest the Lord in thy womb. Thou didst conceive through the ear, and didst lay in a manger Him Whom thou didst bring forth, Whom the host of the Angels worshippeth.

Virgin Right Renowned.

The original Latin of this phrase means, not merely renowned, but "Virgin who should be preached." We have seen how she is foretold in type, symbol and prophecy in the Old Testament, and how her loveliness and dignity have been set forth in the New. If God has thus preached her to us why should she not be preached by us? We have heard sermons about our martyred president,

McKinley, and about the great Roosevelt, etc. All honor to them, because they deserve it. Ought we not, therefore, to hear more sermons about our Lady? "Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Let each lover of Jesus Christ spread a knowledge of the holy Mother. To do so will be to advance a love of humility, purity and faithfulness, eminent characteristics of the Blessed Virgin Mary, even as the preaching of the heroes of the country advances bravery, patriotism and loyalty. If the example of George Washington inspires us in one direction without diminishing God's glory, the example of Mary will inspire us in another direction without diminishing God's glory.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints.

MEDITATION XV.

Virgin Right Powerful.

Every human being instinctively loves and craves power. The sense of our weakness goads us into a show of strength. God **wishes** us to realize our weakness. When we know the wretchedness of our intolerable condition as fallen beings then we will seek help from Him. Our need is His opportunity. Christians should not be cast down when God shows them how sinful and weak they are. God does this

in order to make us seek help of His omnipotence. When we arrive at the state of absolute helplessness and consequent absolute dependence on God, then we have become invincible in God's strength. "When I am weak then as I strong." But this strength can only be obtained through the humiliation of our pride, through complete surrender to God. For this reason most of us would rather content ourselves with a mere show of strength built out of our pride and self-sufficiency. "Self-reliance" is the name of a virtue when it is a figure of speech for God-reliance, otherwise it is the greatest of sins. The Blessed Virgin was most powerful because she was most humble. We are afraid of humility. We think it is undignified and weak. No one had more dignity or strength than our Lady. Yet in her Magnificat she sang: "He hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden **** He that is mighty hath magnified me." Her strength was that of a clinging vine which had knit itself into the Rock of Ages.

MEDITATION XVI.

Virgin Right Merciful.

Mercy in human beings is the result of humility bred by God-power. When power is a manifestation of **selffulness** or the setting up of self against God, it does not dare show mercy. It is not strong enough to do so. There is no mercy with the devil. He finds it too difficult to maintain his position of rebellion against God ever to be lenient.

The greatest mercy one could show toward a

sinful world is to give up one's best beloved for its redemption. Mary did this, and we are forced to believe, from a consideration of her character as painted in Holy Scripture that she did it willingly. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to Thy word." How selfish, how unmerciful, how like the devil, are those parents who stand in the way of their son's vocation to some form of self-sacrifice! How can one hope for salvation if he refuses to allow a member of his household to dedicate himself or herself to God! God gave all and He demands all in return. Jesus did not suffer that we might go scot-free. He suffered for us that we might be willing to suffer for Him.

Our Lady had learned this lesson. Consequently she had a ready sympathy for all of God's children and their slightest need. Consider her tact at the wedding feast [St. Jno. 2.]. She probably had been helping with the serving. She knew of the want. She tried to save her friends any embarrassment. How courteous and thoughtful this was. So she interceded with her Son and He heard her request. Since then Christians have always believed in the mercy and courtesy of her intercession for them with God. Let us say the Memorare, a prayer written years ago by that great saint who composed the hymn "Jesus, the very thought of Thee." (No. 434, American Hymnal).

The Memorare of St. Bernard.

Remember, O Mary, Virgin most kind, that

never was it known that any who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy prayers was left unaided. Inspired by this assurance to thee O Virgin of virgins, my Mother, do I fly. To thee do I come. Before thee sinful and sighing I stand. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my poor words but hear and answer of thy clemency.

MEDITATION XVII.

Virgin Right Faithful.

In the gospel we read (St. L. 11:27) that a certain woman cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee and the paps which Thou hast sucked." Our Lord made reply to the effect that this was certainly true. "Yea." On the other hand, because spiritual relationships are more important than physical, He added that rather are they blessed "who hear the word of God and keep it." We know He was thinking of His Mother when He said this. He wishes to direct our attention, not to the mere fact of her vocation as Mothed of God, but rather to the response she made to it. Her chief praise is not that she was His Mother but that she was more faithful to Him than anyone else. Therefore every one who is faithful to Him is His Mother, His sister, or His brother. [St. Mt. 12:50].

Recall the complete submission of her will to God. "Be it done unto me according to Thy word." Remember how she said at Cana, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Think of her scrupulous

faithfulness to the law, even though she was not under the law in any real sense of the word, in having her Son circumcised and in presenting herself for purification in the Temple. Consider how she kept in her heart all the words of her Son which she did not understand and pondered them. [St. L. 2:51]. Surely she heard the word of God and kept it.

God gave His Son to her to be mothered. How faithful she was to this trust. In spite of the desperate dangers and terrible hardships of the journey into Egypt, at the Angel's command she fled at once. Her sorrow was beyond description when later she lost her Son in the Temple, because she feared she had been unfaithful. "Behold thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing." Through all the blasphemy and horror of the last days of our Lord's earthly life, she clung to him with absolute fidelity. The twelve Apostles might forsake Him and flee. Two might follow Him afar off. She never wavered in her loyalty to Him. Her love made her hope and endure all things for His sake.

She will also be a faithful friend to us if we will allow her to be. In the instructions we have seen that the Church does not permit us to believe the awful teaching that death separates us from our loved ones. God is love and therefore love is a living and eternal bond. Membership in the Body of Christ unites us all. In Christ we may love and claim the Virgin as our friend. For His sake she loves us and will pray for us. "Holy Mary, Mother

of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Ask her to obtain for you the gift of final perseverence.

Multiply our graces;
Give us love and fear,
And, dear Lord, the chiefest,
Grace to persevere.

MEDITATION XVIII.

Mirror of Righteousness.

This is sometimes translated "Mirror of justice" but our version of the Bible ordinarily uses "righteousness" to indicate the condition of being "justified" by grace, and therefore "mirror of righteousness" expresses the Latin better for us. The Blessed Virgin is a mirror of righteousness because, when Jesus Christ looks upon her, He sees His own righteousness most clearly reflected in her. Through the Sacraments and by holy living in their power, we too are to reflect Him until we come "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Seat of Wisdom.

All of those wonderful passages in Holy Scripture [Cf. Prov. 8 and 9, Wis. 8.] which speak of the wisdom of God, are explained by the early writers of the Church to refer to our Lord, Who is the Incarnate Word and Wisdom of God. "In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." We should always think of Christianity as "the

wisdom of God," teaching salvation through repentance and self-denial and the disgrace of the Cross, in which, as "the reproach of Christ," we should all share. Such wisdom as this seems weak foolishness to the world, but the "foolishness of God is wiser than men." Our first mother, **Eva,** listened to the wisdom of the world as the Serpent spoke it to her. Consider the result. Mary, the second **Eva,** reversed the name and fame of the first by listening to **Ave** as St. Gabriel spoke it, calling her to assume the "reproach of Christ," and bear Him Who has taught all nations the wisdom of God through His Church. (St. Mk. 28:20.). She is the Seat of Wisdom because she was the Throne of Incarnate Wisdom. She is also the seat of wisdom because she has learned wisdom through her intimate, daily intercourse with that same Incarnate Wisdom. If St. Theresa could learn so much of God through her daily intercourse with Him in prayer as to deserve the title "Doctor of the Church," what wisdom, think you, must be Mary's, who is the greatest of contemplatives and the nearest both in flesh and spirit to Jesus? Let us pray more faithfully and, guided by the Church, study the Holy Scripture more diligently that, like Mary, we may be "taught of God." Do not complain that you cannot understand the Bible. Read it patiently with prayer and God himself will interpret it to you.

MEDITATION XIX.

Cause of Our Joy.

As Eva has been the cause of all our sorrow so

Ave has been the cause of all our joy. Sin makes sorrow, sin makes sickness, sin makes death. Eve brought this into the world. Jesus gives joy, Jesus gives salvation, Jesus gives eternal life. Mary brought this into the world.

Anyone who has partaken to the full of God's grace like her who was full of grace brings joy wherever she goes. The Feast of the Visitation is sometimes called "the Feast of our Lady of graces" because of the result of that visit. St. Elizabeth, "her cousin" or kinswoman, as it means, was immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost and sang out an inspired greeting to our Lady. The infant Baptist leaped for joy in his Mother's womb. Then our Lady herself sang that paean of joy, the mighty Magnificat. Finally, at the birth of St. John, whose name means "grace," St. Zacharias uttered the joyous canticle which the Church chants in her morning office. [St. L. 1:39].

St. Paul again and again says that joy must be a special characteristic of the life of grace. (Phil. 3:1, 4:4. I Thes. 5:16, etc.) Is joy a characteristic of your life? Sorrow is always a note of the weary world. If you have not joy in your life it is because you have allowed venial sin to diminish your grace. Mortal sin bring death. Venial sin brings sadness. Suffering for God brings joy even while we suffer. A sword pierced through our Lady's soul yet we always think of her as a joyful person. "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced."

Let Us Pray.

O God, in Whose passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, the sword of sorrow pierced through the most sweet soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary: mercifully grant,, for the sake of the prayers and merits of all those Saints who faithfully stood by Thy Cross, that we worthily commemorating Thy sufferings, and Thy Mother's sorrows, may be made partakers of the fruit of Thy Passion. Who livest and reignest, God world without end. Amen.

MEDITATION XX.

Spiritual Vessel.

The preceding meditation has made plain that our Lady gave joy to the world because she bore our Lord and that she had joy in her own heart because she was filled with our Lord's grace. St. Gabriel prophesied that the Holy Spirit would come upon her. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." We know how God plants in each of us by the Sacrament of Confirmation the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; wisdom and understanding, counsel and ghostly strength, knowledge and true Godliness, and holy fear. If we root out of our nature all the weeds of sin and keep it watered with the tears of repentance and fructified with sacramental grace then those seven gifts of the Spirit germinate and bring forth in us the nine beautiful fruits of the spiritual life which St. Paul enumerates. To what perfection must those fruits

have attained in her who was full of grace, the spiritual vessel?

Vessel of Honor.

There are vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor, says Holy Scripture. Mary may be considered as both. She lived a life of poverty, and even disgrace, because of the "reproach of Christ." But what honor she has attained through grace in God's kingdom! Mary's vocation was a sublime one. God can well believe that God endowed her with every possible physical as well as spiritual perfection in order to make her into a fitting shrine for Himself. Great beauty, great wisdom, great strength must have been hers. Yet if God had ordered otherwise, her love for Him would have caused her to accept cheerfully what He ordered for her. Do not worry about honor or dishonor. Worry rather about your dedication to God.

Singular Vessel of Devotion.

Devotion to God is not an emotion. Those people who do not say their prayers or do not go to Church because "they do not feel right" have no devotion. Bishop Brent says, "When it is hard to pray, pray hard." Devotion consists in absolute fidelity to God. It is a matter of the will, not of the feelings. They have devotion who try hard to please God by doing his will, by speaking to and of Him lovingly, by filling their minds with thoughts of Him. They may not enjoy it. It is not necessary to enjoy prayer in order to be devout, but rather to persevere in prayer. Only in heaven may we hope

to enjoy our religion all the while. In this life flesh and sense press down the soul, and the soul must gain the mastery over them by hard work. Mary was a "singular vessel of devotion" because difficulties did not cool her ardor. "He that loveth me keepeth my commandants." That was the test of her devoutness. Is it the test of yours?

MEDITATION XXI.

Mystical Rose.

Now come a series of poetical titles.

The rose is the most fragrant of flowers. Never was a life more fragrant with holiness than Mary's. The rose blooms cheerfully in all lands. No hardship checks it. Such was Mary's devotion. The rose is red, and Mary is aflame with the love of God. The rose is white, and Mary is the whitest of all the virgins that follow Jesus. The rose is gold, and Mary has been refined in the furnace of affliction. The rose has green leaves, and Mary has brought hope into the world, so that the Church uses green as one of the ecclesiastical colors. There is a dear story that in Paradise the rose had no thorns, but that after Adam's sin God commanded it always to bear thorns as well as flowers. Mary was full of grace because she lived among the thorns of mortification, as we read "as the lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters."

Tower of David.

We have seen in the instructions that every Saint is a tower of strength to the Church. David

fortified Jerusalem with many great towers. One, stronger and more important than the rest, so it is said, was called after him "the tower of David." Our Lady, David's offspring, is the mighty tower in which the great Warrior and Prince of Peace, the Captain of our salvation, encamped himself in order to defeat the "Prince of this world."

Tower of Ivory.

Our Lady is not only a mighty fortress of God's indwelling. She is also a tower of ivory, a palace of beauty. Ivory suggests to us the whiteness and the exquisite refinement of her soul. It is not enough to strengthen ourselves against sin, like a tower of David. We must also refine and beautify our souls in order that our Lord may take delight in us. What have you done today in order to make yourself pleasing in God's sight. Someone has said: "Wonderful as this tower of ivory is, in its loveliness, with its finely wrought pinnacles and richly carved ornaments, there is nothing weak about it. Ivory is firm, solid and durable. We can rely on it not decaying or crumbling to dust."

MEDITATION XXII.

House of Gold.

Like the Temple of Solomon, which was a house of gold, so is our Lady. "The King's daughter is all glorious within." Solomon built the Temple with extreme care and put therein the most costly treasures he could find. Why? Because it was to enshrine the Skekinah, the visible manifestation of

God, even as a Christian temple should always enshrine the reserved Sacrament. Mary was built by God of the most costly graces in order to be a Temple for Himself. You also are the Temple of God. Day by day He showers upon you graces bought by His most precious Blood in order that you may be a worthy dwelling place for Himself. "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" [Cor. 3:16].

Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant was the special place at which God manifested Himself to the Jews. Since the Shekinah of God's presence shone forth between the wings of the Cherubim over the Ark, the Ark is an obvious symbol of the Mother of God. In the Ark there was deposited a copy of the law, which reminds us that from Mary came our Prophet Who has preached the new law of God to us from the Cross. The pot of manna was also kept there, which signifies the blessed Sacrament, in which our high Priest gives Himself to us. Aaron's rod that budded was also laid up in the Ark, and this is a symbol of the King whom our Lady bore, Who rules us with the sceptre of mercy.

Gate of Heaven.

The Blessed Virgin is so called because through her, as through "the gate beautiful" God sent down heaven into this world. For the Incarnation means that heaven, with its power and glory, has come to earth. Did not our Lord set up here in this wicked world the Kingdom of heaven?

Morning Star.

After the first sin terrible darkness reigned over the earth. Our Lady was the morning star which heralded the "Day-spring from on high," the Sun of Righteousness, who arose with healing in His wings. All stars shine with a reflected light but the morning star is more beautiful than any other star because it reflects the glory of the Sun more than does any other planet. "Let your light so shine." "Ave, Maris Stella!"

Felix Es, Sacra Virgo Maria.

Happy art thou, O sacred Virgin Mary, and most worthy of all praise, for out of Thee hath arisen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, who having loosened the curse hath given us the blessing, and overcoming death hath given unto us life everlasting.

MEDITATION XXIII.

Health of the Sick: Refuge of Sinners.

These titles testify to the belief which Christians in all ages have had regarding the wonderful things accomplished through our Lady's intercession. We know how our Lord gave His Apostles power to heal the sick [St. Lk. 10:9]. In every age of the Church there have been miracles of healing performed through prayer. Surely what others are able to do by prayer, our Lady, the foremost of the Saints, may also accomplish. Any fair-minded person who investigates the miracles of healing at any of the Blessed Virgin's great shrines cannot but be

impressed by the power of God made manifest there.

Not merely for the sick in body but also for the sick in soul does Mary plead. She is a refuge of sinners. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." The story is told of the blessed cure d'ars that his sympathy and patience with sinners became so famous that hundreds of persons burdened in soul flocked to his little Church to be relieved of their sins under his guidance. He was a great "refuge for sinners." Sinners came for the help of his holiness, sympathy and prayers, as well as for his absolution. Is it not something like this with our Lady? Great holiness and purity have given her great tenderness. Of course we must not think of her as more tender and gracious than our Lord. That would be a blasphemous idea! Because she is a godly person, she shares God's intense hatred of sin and His intense love of sinners. She is an earthly "City of refuge," as it were, whence sinners may flee, not for pardon, but for help to make themselves fit for pardon.

Alma Redemptoris Mater.

Nursing Mother of the Redeemer, thou portal
of heaven,
Which remainest open, thou Star of the sea:
succour the fallen
Who fain would rise. Thou who hast begotten,
to the wonder of nature,
Thy Holy Creator, Virgin both before and after,
Who dost from the mouth of Gabriel receive
the Ave:

Have compassion for us sinners.

V. After childbirth thou didst still remain a virgin inviolate.

R. Birth-giver of God, intercede for us.

Let Us Pray.

O God, who hast bestowed upon mankind the rewards of eternal salvation, etc. [See same collect above.]

MEDITATION XXIV.

Comforter of the Afflicted.

It is a law of God that He chooses to help us through His children. He mediates physical life to us through our parents. He mediates spiritual life to us through our Mother, the Church. The sympathy of some friend is always a great help in time of sorrow and sin. "What would I have done if it had not been for so-and-so!" is an exclamation often heard. Catholics love and trust the blessed Mother of our Saviour in this same way. They know her as a tender, compassionate friend who will help us by her powerful intercession both to overcome sin and to obtain pardon.

It is because Christians have experienced the help and comfort of Mary's prayers in every difficulty of life that common consent gives her the beautiful title "Comforter of the afflicted." Was not your earthly mother always ready to help you in your childish woes? When our Lord from the Cross gave His Mother to St. John, He made her the mother and comforter of everyone of His brethren. The Church was represented at the Cross by her

Apostle St. John. To him, and through him to the Church and to each member of the Church, our Lord says: "Behold thy Mother." This reasoning seems far-fetched until one has grasped the corporate character of the Church which is the Communion of Saints.

We have seen that invocation of Saints is not really a doctrine but **a practice resulting from a doctrine.** There is no doctrine of invoking Saints. The doctrine is the Communion of Saints. Those who refuse to admit the helpfulness and reasonableness of this holy practice are usually persons who have not grasped what St. Paul means by that tremendous phrase of his, "Body of Christ." Putting prejudice aside, is it not a great comfort to feel that in the presence of the God of love in heaven we have many friends pleading for us,even as we have in the Church below? Do you not want to feel that our Lady delights to go to her gracious Son and courteously ask of Him the favor that you have desired of Him?

St. Paul lays it down as a law of God [Cor. 1:3] that the God of all comfort comforts us in all our tribulation in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. It is the duty of every follower of the Crucified to minister the comfort of the Sacred Heart to the world. Every Catholic believes that our Lady is the chief minister of comfort among all the Saints whom God has chosen for that work.

Salve Regina.

Hail holy Queen, Mother of mercy,
[And of] our Life, our Sweetness and our Hope!
All hail to thee!

To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping
In this vale of tears.

Turn then, O gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us,
And after this, our exile here, show unto us
The blessed Fruit of thy womb, Jesus!

O gracious, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

[Note: This is probably the most famous of all the antiphons of our Lady, but its hyperbolic form have always given anxiety to some Catholics, as will be seen from a perusal of the history of the antiphon given in any good ecclesiastical dictionary. Two words have been inserted in the above translation in order to bring out the real meaning and to limit the hyperbole. Our Lady is our life primarily in the sense that she brought Life, i. e., Jesus Christ, into the world. Secondarily we may call her "our life" because she helps to obtain it for us by her intercession.]

MEDITATION XXV.

Help of Christians, Pray for Us.

In the instructions, mention was made of the fact that religious people of today are apt to overemphasize the subjective side of religion. To such, the help of our Lady's wonderful example of holiness is the only help they can conceive of receiving from her. But if the age-long belief among Christians that the holy dead are conscious and do not forget us but strive to help us in every way God allows, surely the Church may count on our Lady's help as the greatest of all. Did she not bring forth the divine Founder of the Church? Did she not train Him for His life work? Did she not go to the upper room after His resurrection and pray with the Apostle for the coming of the Holy Ghost in order that the church might be born on Whitsun Day? Can we doubt that her advice, her example, her ministrations and her prayers were a constant help to the Church in its infant days? If love is "as strong as death," as the Scripture says, do we doubt that her love binds her to the Church Militant still, and that now in heaven she constantly labors in our behalf, even as St. Peter promised that he would endeavor to help us after his decease? [1 St. P. 1:15].

A certain young man who believed greatly in the sympathy and prayers of his god-mother once said to her: "I can overcome this sin of drunkeness if you will help me," and he did. He did not mean that her help, rather than God's help, would overcome

his sin. He meant that he wanted her to help him to get God's help. Our Lady is "the Help of Christians" because she helps them to get God's help. There is no member of the Body of Christ so fitted to be the help of Christians as she who is nearest our Lord both in flesh and spirit and whose mind is most like our Lord's, so that her prayers will be the most powerful on account of her wisdom and holiness and her knowledge of how to pray aright. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous person availeth much."

God tells us, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty. I have exalted one chosen out of my people." [Ps. 89:20]. There are few who would insist that this passage refers only to our Lord in his sacred Humanity. It refers to every holy one of God, and therefore especially to the holiest of Saints, God's Mother. If the Angels are appointed "to succour and defend us on earth," as the Church teaches, can we doubt that our Lady has a place of importance in the wonderful co-ordination of the services of Angels and men "ordained and constituted" by God.

Many think that God gives the Saints more power in His Kingdom than even the power of prayer. Our Lord promises to make him who is faithful in a few things ruler over many things in heaven. This seems to indicate that each Saint has a divine work to do for God's Church, whether he is a Saint in the Church Militant or in the Church Triumphant. We must learn that the distinctions

which many modern Christians make between live Saints and dead Saints are artificial and wicked.

At any rate we know that the holiness or merits of the Saints are a help to the Church. If, as we have seen from the instructions, the sin of one Christian injures the whole Body, or the victory of one Christian strengthens the whole Body, we can understand how it is that every Saint is a help to Christians. Moreover, St. John says that God gives us grace for grace. That is, every grace which we win by spiritual struggle obtains a greater grace for us. To him that hath shall be given, is the rule of the spiritual life. Since every thought, word or deed pleasing to God, is the result of a grace given us, every such thought, word or deed, brings down upon the Church a greater rain of grace. "Grace for grace." Hence the holiness or merits of the Saints intercede for us as well as their prayers, and we may ask our Lord to bless and help us through the merits or for the sake of the Saints. This is a point on which people are much confused today. The merits of our Lord are the only hope of salvation of any of us because they obtain our justification, which is essentially our incorporation into the Body of Christ, so that we are infused with His life and grace. But once a member of the Body, the holiness which He has given to other members helps us also. That is what is meant by the prayeyr anciently always said by the priest at the beginning of Mass: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of all the Saints, vouchsafe to forgive me all my sins."

Let Us Pray.

Almighty and merciful God, Who in a wondrous manner hath established a perpetual help in the Blessed Virgin Mary: Mercifully grant that we who in life do battle under the protection of such a help may in death obtain victory over our malignant foe. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MEDITATION XXVI.
Queen of All Angels.

Enthroned above the nine choirs of Angels there is not a mighty Seraphic Archangel, but a human being, one who was once a little village maiden in Nazareth. A pious opinion is held by some Catholics that Lucifer fell from his high estate because he refused to bow to the decree that God the Son should become Incarnate in the human race rather than that He should unite to Himself the nature of Angels, for by this decree, mankind was exalted over the Angelic hierachy. At any rate we know from divine revelation that many Angels fell. Are those empty thrones to be filled by the Saints of the human race? If so, the highest throne of all, perhaps once Lucifer's, is now our Lady's! Can we doubt it? "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek."

We know that the Angels delighted in our Lady. St. Gabriel was so impressed by the beauty of her spotless soul that he exclaimed in admiration: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." What

joy the guardian Angel of our Lady and the guardian Angel of her divine Son must have taken in their God-given charges. With what joy all the Angels must have welcomed the spotless bride of our Lord to her rightful place as their queen in heaven! If we compare our Lady with the Seraphim, do we doubt that Her love is greater than theirs! Can it be that the Cherubim have more wisdom than the Mother of good counsel? And what Angel of the order of Thrones is more exalted than she who became a shrine for God.

Ave Regina Coelorum.

Hail, O queen of heaven enthoned!
Hail, by Angels mistress owned!
Root of Jesse, Gate of morn,
Whence the world's true Light was born.

Glorious Virgin, joy to thee,
Beautiful surpassingly!
Fairest thou where all are fair!
Plead for us to Christ a prayer.

MEDTIATION XXVII.

Queen of Patriarchs: Queen of Prophets.

Our Lady is the queen of Patriarchs because she excelled them all in virtue and because her Offspring is greater than theirs. Abraham's obedience, Isaac's trustfulness, Jacob's perseverence in prayer, Joseph's purity, Job's patience are not to be com-

pared with our Lady's. The word Patriarch means a forefather. Our Lady was the greatest of parents; and from her divine Son there has sprung the generation "whom the Lord hath made" by redemption. As we say of her in one of her antiphons: "Thou art our sister; be thou the mother of thousands of millions: and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them."

Our Lady is the theme of prophets. Every prophecy about our Lord indirectly concerns her. Because she bore the King of Prophets, she is the Queen Mother of them all. Moreover, our Lady herself prophesied: "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

Because she bore the Master of Apostles she is also their queen. We know that she was full of Apostolic zeal. At Cana she preached Christ. "Whatsoever he saith unto you do it." Moreover, as a result of her zeal on that occasion, "His disciples believed on Him." A charming story, illustrating what Catholics have always considered to be her place among the Apostles, is told by St. John of Damascus. The Apostles all gathered at our Lady's house when they heard that she was about to die,—except St. Thomas, who came too late. But he who through his tardy belief in our Lord's resurrection helped to confirm belief in it also through his tardiness on this occasion helped to confirm belief. For he insisted on going to her tomb and, accompanied by the other Apostles, he discovered her Assumption.

This story certainly pictures our Lady as the gentle Mistress of these first princes of the Church.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

Queen of All Saints.

St. Simeon prophecied that a sword should pierce through our Lady's soul as well as our Lord's. It is customary to reckon seven great sorrows of dolours which our Lady had. 1. The prophecy of St. Simeon concerning both her Holy Child and herself. 2. Her flight with the Holy Child into the darkness of heathen Egypt. 3. The losing of the Holy Child in Jerusalem. 4. The meeting with her Son carrying His heavy Cross. 5. Her "compassion" (or suffering-with her divine Son) at His death on the Cross. 6. The taking down of her divine Son from the Cross and laying Him dead in her bosom. 7. The burial of her Son in the holy sepulchre. Hence our Lady is known as the Mother of sorrows, and that prophecy concerning our Lord is also applied to her: Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Because of these and her other great sufferings, which are believed to have been beyond that of any martyr, we call her the Queen of martyrs.

She is the Queen of Confessors because she was foremost in living for our Lord. Her life gets all its glory from her connection with Him. We know the joy with which she served Him during His earthly life. Can we not imagine the joy with which

she went to Mass and received her Son in the Sacrament of His love after the resurrection?

"Rejoice O Virgin Mary: thou alone hath destroyed all the heresies throughout the world," is an antiphon from the Office of our Lady which sets forth her character as a Confessor of Christ. By the Incarnation which took place through Mary, the Truth has been set forth visibly once for all and all occasions for heresy has been destroyed.

Nothing need be said as to the appropriateness of the title "Queen of Virgins." That has been covered already when we spoke of her as the Virgin "of virgins."

From the foregoing we can understand our Lady's worthiness of her position as Queen of Saints. Of her we read in the Apocalypse: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." So great is her holiness that in this passage she appears as a type of the Church, and, as the parable goes on, her life of holiness and sorrow is used as a symbol of the Church undergoing persecution from the evil spirits in this world. [Rev. 12]. The highest throne in heaven is Mary's. And our Lord delights to hear her prayer for us now, even as once He delighted to obey her slightest command.

MEDITATION XXIV.

The Final Titles.

Our Lady is called "Queen conceived without

original sin," or as the words are altered in the version of the Litany given in this book, "Queen delivered from all sin." Our Lady's conception and sinlessness we have discussed above. In a book intended for devotional use we cannot descend into the polemical arena, and give all the pros and cons of a theological dispute such as there is over the Immaculate Conception.

She is also Queen of the holy Rosary. The Rosary is an ancient devotion commended to us by many Saints of God. It is largely the prejudice of the last few centuries that keeps some Catholics of today from using this method of prayer. We should lay aside our prejudice and judge of the devotion on its own merits as to whether it is a good one or not. Such a combination of mental and vocal prayer as it is designed to be cannot but take a high place among the Church's devotional forms. The subjects for meditation during the recitation of the Rosary are all about our Lord except the last two, which represent the working out of our Lord's life of grace and glory into the life of His holy Mother and therefore of all the Church. They are as follows:—

The five joyful mysteries: the Annunciation; the Visitation; the Birth of our Lord; the Presentation in the Temple; the Finding of our Lord in the Temple.

The sorrowful mysteries: the Agony of our Lord in the Garden; the Scourging; the Crowning with Thorns; the Carrying of the Cross; the Death on the Cross.

The glorious mysteries: The Resurrection; the Ascension; the Coming of the Holy Ghost; the Assumption of our Lady; her Coronation in heaven.

On these mysteries one meditates as he repeats the prescribed prayers, all of which are the common forms of Catholic devotion; the Creed, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Gloria. We who are so cold in our love for our Lord, so lacking in systematic prayer about His life and especially about His Passion, so prone to wandering thoughts, may perhaps find in the Rosary a cure for all these ills. It is a systematic devotion, causing us to think about His life and suffering, making them real to us. It is the tenderest of devotions, letting us into his family life. It is the most human of devotions because wholly concerned with His sacred Humanity. Sometimes it is called the Psalter of our Lady because, when the entire Rosary is said, in order to use the whole of the fifteen mysteries, the Hail Mary, (or, as it may be termed, the Psalm of the Incarnation) is recited one hundred fifty times, as many times as there are Psalms in the Psalter.

In some parts of the Church it has been customary as a result of the terrible war to end this Litany with the invocation. "Queen of peace, pray for us." Peace is the absence of fear. We may have peace in battle, peace in death, peace in sorrow, peace at all times, if we give ourselves completely unto the hands of God as Mary did.

Let Us Pray.

O God, whose Only-Begotten Son hath pur-

chased for us, by His life and death and resurrection, the rewards of eternal life: Grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating on the mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both put into practice what they set forth and also attain what they promised. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

MEDITATION XXX.

Hail Mary.

The Hail Mary is the Church's chief devotion in honor of our Lord's Incarnation. One must not forget that fact when speaking of the use of the Hail Mary. The Our Father has no word about this basic truth of Christianity. It is for this reason that next to the Our Father, Catholics value the Hail Mary. All Catholics are poets in some degree. For example, they do not feel it inappropriate to sing Mary's Magnificat, even though the words cannot be literally applied to themselves. They are poetic enough to find a symbolic fitness in the words. Consequently they find the Hail Mary a fitting prayer of honor, not only to our Lady, but to the Incarnation of our Lord. In form, the Hail Mary is addressed to His Mother, but in historic origin and in poetic interpretation, it is an emphatic way of honoring the Word made flesh. It is impossible to say the Hail Mary without thinking of the Incarnation. That is why Catholics repeat it over and over again and never grow tired of it.

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," said St. Gabriel. "Blessed art thou among women," and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus," said St. Elizabeth. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death," says the Church. According to the sentiments with which one desires to pray, the Hail Mary may become an act of love for our Lord in His sacred Humanity or of love for His Mother, an act of faith in His Incarnation or in the Church's belief about the Blessed Virgin, an act of contrition for us sinners or a prayer for a good death.

During the war a beautiful custom has been revived in many Churches of England, that of ringing the Angelus bell at six a. m., at twelve a. m. and at 6 p. m. in order that people may pause and pray to God in honor of the Incarnation of the Prince of peace from her who is the Queen of peace. A good rule of prayer for every Churchman would be to say this holy devotion at the three divisions of the day, thus consecrating our waking hours to the sacred Humanity of our Lord.

The Angelus.

V. The Angel of the Lord announced unto Mary. R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. R. Holy Mary. Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord. R. Be

it unto me according to thy word.

V. Hail Mary, etc. R. Holy Mary, etc.

V. And the Word was made flesh. R. And dwelt among us.

V. Hail Mary, etc. R. Holy Mary, etc.

Let Us Pray.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, pour Thy grace into our hearts: That as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of an Angel, so by His Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. May the souls of the faithful through the mercy of God rest in peace. R. Amen.

MEDITATION XXXI.

Types of Our Lady.

It is the custom of Catholic devotional writers to find a great deal more in Holy Scripture than the mere literal or grammatical meaning. Without attempting to defend the mystical interpretation of Scripture may we not agree that it is helpful to use Scriptural phrases and analogies apart from their mere literal meaning to express devotional thoughts. For example, blessed Launcelot Andrewes uses the names of the ancient enemies of the people of God, i. e., the Amorites, the Hittites, etc., as types of the seven deadly sins. The language of devotion, in order to be stronger and more expressive, must be poetic. This is a sufficient justification of the mystical interpretation if we are not seeking to establish any doctrine by that method of interpretation.

The Song of songs is interpreted mystically of our Lady. There are certain sober exegetical reasons for doing so, aside from the reason given above but this is a sufficient reason for our purpose. Most of the Scriptural antiphons in the Office of our Lady are drawn from this source. One of the most beautiful is the following: "A garden inclosed is My spouse: a spring shut up, a fountain sealed."

Our Lady is a garden inclosed in which our Lord may take delight. It was built for Him alone. The flowers are His. There He goes that He may gather the lilies of purity and enjoy the fragrance of virtuous deeds. [Cf. 6:2.] Every Christian should be a garden inclosed from the world and dedicated to the pleasure of our Lord. We should hide our good things that He alone may see them and reward.

Likewise she is a spring shut up. Nothing defiling may enter into her. This is the result of her dedication. Just so our Baptismal, Ordination or Religious vows shut up from the defiling and polluting poisons of the world. If a spring is to be of benefit we must be sure that it is clean. God assures Himself of our fitness for our respective vocations by shutting us up within certain vows and bonds. Our Lady's protection was her perpetual Virginity. What is yours?

She was also a fountain sealed. Underneath the covering, hidden out of the sight of the world, there was always welling up the pure waters of love and self-sacrifice. The fountain was there even

if it was unseen. In winter God seals up the fountains of the earth under a covering of ice and snow. Yet unseen the fountains continue to put forth their flow of water. God hides us, even as He hid our Lady in Egypt and Nazareth. It did not matter to Him that the world did not value our Lady as He did. Neither should it matter to you that you are unknown or despised. God has sealed you up, and the pain of lonliness or of despite is His seal on your life.

II.

The book of Esther tells how one brave Saint saved all the Church of God from extinction in her time. Just as Esther, in her beauty and purity, moved the king by her prayers for her people, just so our Lady now enters the Presence of the King of heaven and pleads for us. "If I have found favor in Thy sight, and if it please the King, let my people be granted me at my request." Surely it is always the weak things of this world that God chooses to bring to naught the things that are mighty. Which do you value most, prayer and grace or riches and worldly influence?

III.

The Book of Judith tells of a brave deed of a Mother in Israel. When God's people were frightened to the point of defeat because of the oppression of a prince of this world, she went out alone armored only in faith and grace, and slew the chief enemy. Our Lady had only her faith and the grace that God had given her, and she went out into new paths and

dangerous ways, trusting in God, and we may say of her more than of Judith, "O daughter, blessed art thou of the Most High God above all the women upon the earth; and blessed be the Lord God, Which hath directed thee to the cutting off of the head of the chief of our enemies. For this thy confidence shall not depart from the heart of men, which remember the power of God forever. And God turn these things to thee for a perpetual praise, because thou hast not spared thy life for the affliction of our nation, but hath revenged our ruin, walking a straight way for our God." This is the way that God intends you to fight His battles. When the faith of the Church was stronger than it is now, a St. Paul or a St. Francis Xavier went out and conquered whole countries for God, battling in the power of prayer and the Mass. No elaborate machinery of Missionary Boards was needed then. Not that we should belittle the work of such Boards now. Rather we should strive to add to them the more powerful machinery of prayer and Eucharistic Sacrifice. Is this your idea and method of fighting the battles of the Kingdom of heaven on earth? Is it not God's?

Regina Coeli.

Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven. Alleluia!
He Whom thou was meet to bear, Alleluia!
As He promised, hath arisen. Alleluia!
Pour for us to God thy prayeyr. Alleluia!

V. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, O Virgin Mary.

Alleluia. R. For the Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Let Us Pray.

O God, Who by the ressurection of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, hast gladdened the whole world; Grant, we beseech Thee, that holpen by the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may attain to the joys of eternal life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

[This devotion is used in Eastertide in the place of the Angelus.]

LITANY OF THE TITLES OF OUR LADY.

Lord have mercy upon us.
Christ have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.
O Christ hear us.
O Christ graciously hear us.
O God the Father, of Heaven; **have mercy upon us.**
O God the Son, Redeemer of the world; **have mercy upon us.**
O God the Holy Ghost; **have mercy upon us.**
O Holy Trinity, one God; **have mercy upon us.**
Holy Mary, **pray for us.**
Holy Mother of God;
Holy Virgin of Virgins;
Mother of Christ;
Mother of divine grace;
Mother most pure;
Mother most chaste;
Mother inviolate;
Mother undefiled;
Mother most amiable;
Mother most admirable;
Mother of good counsel;
Mother of our Creator;
Mother of our Saviour;
Virgin right prudent;
Virgin right venerable;
Virgin right renowned;
Virgin right powerful;

Virgin right merciful;
Virgin right faithful;
Mirror of righteousness;
Seat of wisdom;
Cause of our joy;
Spiritual vessel;
Vessel of honour;
Singular vessel of devotion;
Mystical Rose;
Tower of David;
Tower of Ivory;
House of gold;
Ark of the Covenant;
Gate of heaven;
Morning Star;
Health of the sick;
Refuge of sinners;
Counselor of the afflicted;
Help of Christians;
Queen of Angels;
Queen of Patriarchs;
Queen of Prophets;
Queen of Apostles;
Queen of Martyrs;
Queen of Confessors;
Queen of Virgins;
Queen of all Saints.
Queen delivered from original sin;
Queen of the holy Rosary;
Queen of peace; **pray for us.**

O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world; **Spare us, good Lord.**

O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world; **Graciously hear us, good Lord.**

O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world; **Have mercy upon us.**

O Christ hear us.

O Christ graciously is.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let Us Pray.

Grant unto us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, to rejoice in continual health of mind and body; and by the glorious intercession of blessed Mary, Ever-Virgin, deliver us from this present sadness and give us the fruition of everlasting gladness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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